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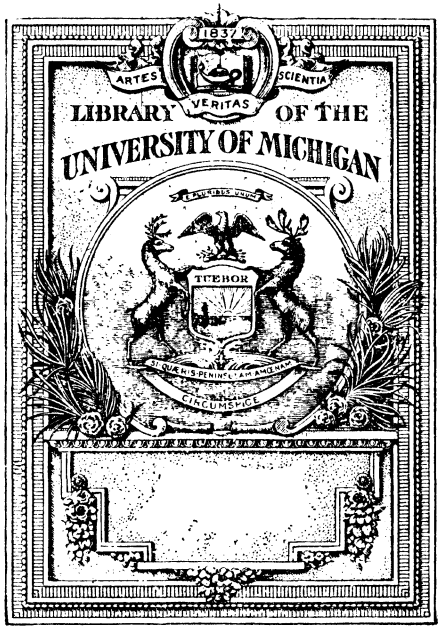
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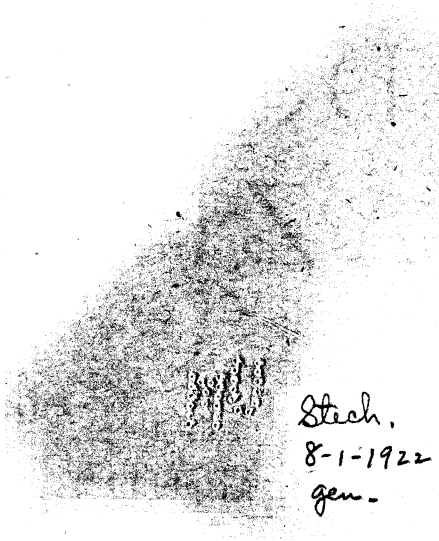
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THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE

AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY
FOR MEN AND WOMEN

VOL. XLVIII
JUNE TO NOVEMBER 1918

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1918



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THE JUNE WINDSOR

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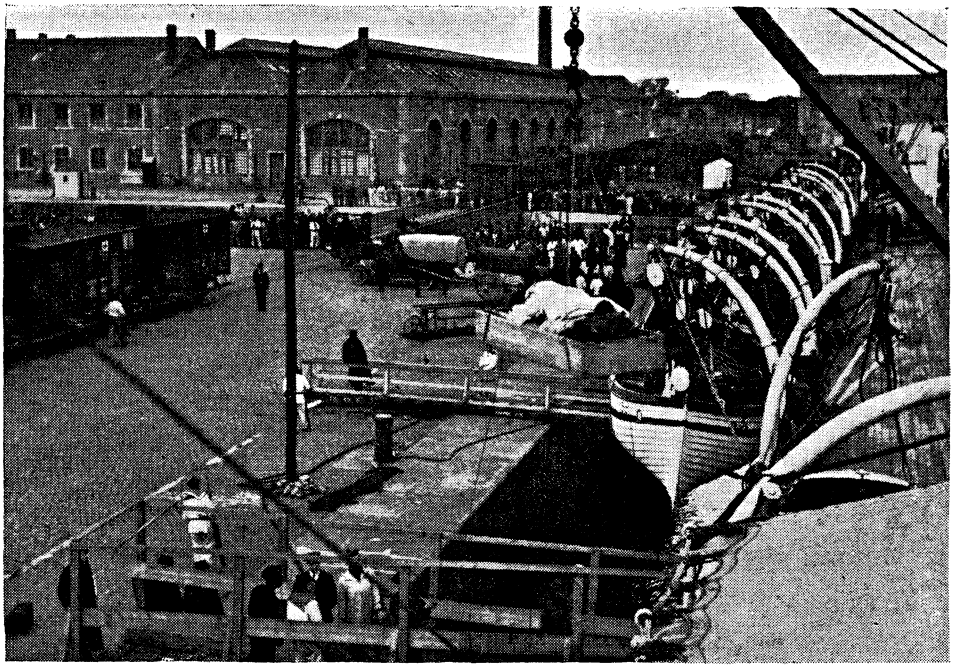
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"BRITAIN'S DAUGHTERS."

BY LUCIEN DAVIS.



THE "REWA'S" FIRST COT CASE BEING TAKEN ON BOARD.

THE TORPEDOING OF THE BRITISH HOSPITAL SHIP "REWA"

By JOHN STOREY

THE hospital ship *Rewa* was bound from Malta. She complied strictly with the letter and spirit of the Geneva Convention, and with the requirements of the German Government in not entering the prohibited areas and in having on board a Spanish Commissioner whilst in the Mediterranean. This Commissioner was landed at Gibraltar. His statement, as published by the Admiralty, is: "*I can guarantee that all the conditions agreed on were scrupulously observed.*"

The *Rewa* was a triple-screw turbine vessel of 7308 tons gross, 471 feet in length, 52¼ feet beam, and had a maximum speed of 18·5 knots. Built in 1906, she was taken over by the Government as a troopship, and when war broke out in 1914, she was converted into a naval hospital ship. She was built for, and was owned and manned by, the British India Steam Navigation Company, Ltd.

As a hospital ship her itinerancy covered something over 45,000 miles, during which time she carried well over 50,000 patients. She also rescued the crews of three torpedoed ships. On one occasion, whilst searching for a missing boat from a torpedoed vessel, she came upon a ship being attacked by a German submarine. Standing by, but not interfering—which is one of the laws of the Geneva Convention—she waited until the action was over. When the ship had sunk and the submarine had submerged, she steamed up and rescued the crew.

On her fateful voyage the *Rewa* had on

board 587 persons, of whom 287 were patients, the remainder consisting of the medical staff and crew. Her position was in the Bristol Channel on January 4, 1918, at 11.15 p.m., when she was torpedoed without the slightest warning of any kind. She sank one hour and two minutes afterwards. The survivors were rescued at about 3.30 a.m. on January 5, and landed at Swansea on the same day, just before noon.

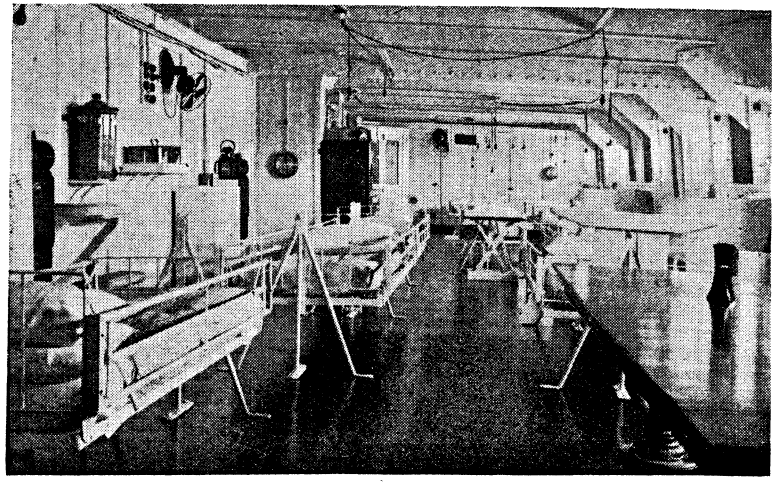
The following account is the story of the disaster written by one of the senior officers, who left the ship five minutes before she sank.

"Calm, fine, clear weather." Such would have been the entry in the ship's log-book at midnight by the officer on watch; but, by the grace of Hunnish frightfulness, that entry, or any other, will never again be made in the *Rewa's* log.

Walking to and fro, the officer was looking ahead over the waters, seeking to pierce the darkness, to see anything which would endanger the ship under him and the lives of those on board. For this ship, could you have seen her steaming through the darkness, would have told you, by her brilliantly-lighted red crosses and continuous band of green lights nearly the whole of her length, that on board there were men broken in mind, health, or body—helpless, many of them, as a new-born babe. Some were dying men, whose last consolation was that, could they live a few more hours, they would have their own folk near them when their time came.

Could you have walked through the wards with me—ten in all—one short hour before the attack, you would have been astonished at finding everything so very much like a hospital on shore—a row of neat beds along the white-painted side of the ship, a space for a gangway, then another neat row of beds, and so on; electric lights everywhere, radiators, fire-extinguishers, cupboards, tables, and seats; screens and glass-topped trolleys with trays of shining instruments, rolls of dressing, jars of various coloured liquids, and all the medley of mysterious things used in alleviating pain; lifts to convey the helpless to the upper decks, or, perhaps, to one or the other of the operating theatres. Everything is spotlessly clean. Underfoot, linoleum covers the whole deck, and along each gangway, between the rows of beds, runs a strip of white-scrubbed canvas to deaden the sound of footsteps.

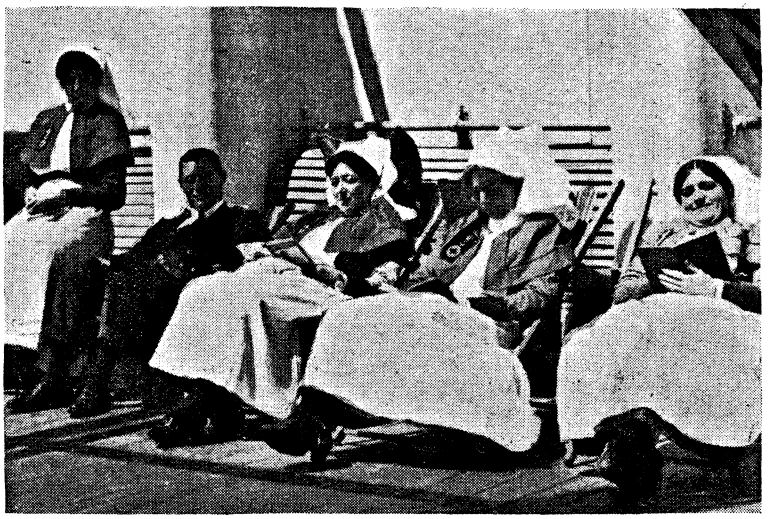
At this hour hardly a sound is heard, save the breathing of the patients in the long rows of beds, the almost inaudible hum of the engines, and the lapping of water outside. Now and then an attendant goes silently by to attend to the wants of a patient. See, the door at the other end of the ward has opened. One of the medical officers comes in, followed by one of the Sisters. An attendant meets them "at attention." Round the ward they go, visiting each bed, examining the patients' "charts," seeing that all is as it should be. Watching, we see them stop at a bed near-by, where is a man on his back. One of his legs is elevated, and is bound by white bandaging to a long wood splint. The man is awake. A whispered question and answer passes between the man and the medical officer; there is a whispered order, and an attendant places a screen round the bed, while another wheels along a dressing trolley. A light is switched on behind the screen. An interval of a few minutes, during which the clink of glass and the swish of liquid being poured is heard. A few more whispered words, and the screen is removed.



ONE OF THE WARDS.

The medical officer and Sister continue on their round of mercy.

We pass on to another ward. As in the one we have just left, all are sleeping. But no. This straggle-bearded, hollow-cheeked, pallid-faced man is surely not asleep; his skeleton-like hands constantly pluck at his bed-clothes. There is a whispered word from the attendant: "Enteric." Here and there, as we pass through the ward, we see others who do not appear to be sleeping. "Malaria," "dysentery," whispers the attendant, as we go by.



SOME OF THE STAFF OF NURSES ON DECK, AWAITING THE EMBARKATION OF PATIENTS.

Yet another ward. An attendant guards the door. This door, over which is written "Ward for Mental Cases," has a grille of stout iron bars, through which we see a row of similar doors. These doors are marked "Padded Cell No. 1," "No. 2," and so on. Fortunately, there are only three cells occupied this voyage.

Meanwhile the officer on watch is still gazing into the blackness of the night, occasionally raising his binoculars to his eyes to verify his naked vision. Later on, having just turned in his walk to and fro across the bridge, he catches the glimmer of a light away on the port bow some two or three miles off. Looking through his glasses, he sees a dull white light, and watches it closely for a couple of minutes, trying to distinguish further detail. Suddenly another light appears almost alongside the first one, but it is a much brighter light, and appears to be flashing some signal. The officer can make no sense out of it. It is not signalling; it is just like the light shown usually by a "pilot boat." A message sent down to the captain immediately brings him on to the bridge. A few comments pass between them while they watch the light. By this time the lights were about half a mile distant, well out on the port bow. The ship was steaming eight knots, having reduced to that speed some hours previously, to prevent getting into port before the time of tide next day. Presently the captain gave the order to port the helm. The ship had turned four points to starboard under her helm, when a loud explosion occurred abreast the funnel on the port side, which shook the ship as if some giant hand were using her as a dice-box. Amid the crash of falling *débris* and tinkle of broken glass there boomed out five blasts on the ship's whistle. This was the prearranged signal for all on board to go to their "boat station." Orders were passed from the bridge in quiet tones: "Close all watertight doors." "Pass all helpless patients into their boats." "Send out the S.O.S. wireless call." And then: "Abandon ship." For it was soon seen, by those responsible for the hurried examination as to the extent of the damage, that it would be a miracle if she remained afloat.

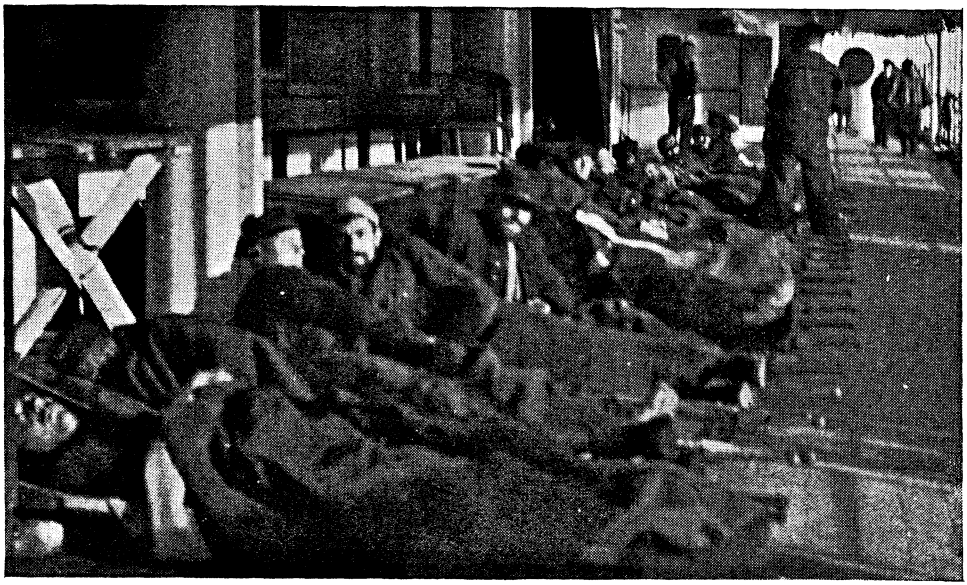
The stokehold, which received the full force of the explosion, was filled with water almost instantly. Four men—the only lives lost—who were working there were never seen again. The hole caused by the explosion extended to the engine-room also. The engineers on watch were washed off their feet. One managed to gain a ladder, and escaped without further mishap; the other said afterwards: "I couldn't do anything at first; there was no interval between the explosion and a wall of foaming water which rushed at me. I had no time to act; it caught me up and carried me, spluttering and gasping, the length of the engine-room

to the after-bulkhead, where, as luck would have it, I was thrown against the controlling-rod of a watertight door. Clinging to this with all my strength, and fighting the water swirling about me, which threatened every moment to tear me from my hold, I managed to get a good grip of the rod above the water. Losing not a moment, I was soon climbing up it, through the dense fog of steam which now filled the place, and gained the upper gallery (a platform at the top of the engine-room). More than half-stunned, bruised all over, and almost blinded with the sting of the steam, I groped my way to the engine-room door and escaped."

An interesting feature of unusual, perhaps unique, occurrence was the automatical stoppage of the ship's engines as a result of the explosion. The boilers were covered with water almost instantly, which cooled them so rapidly that it "killed" the steam. The turbines, it was agreed, must have become so distorted by the sudden change of temperature, as the water came in contact with the roter-casings, that the blades were stripped off the roters, causing the turbines at once to stop.

The experiences of those whose cabins were over the vicinity of the explosion were rather terrifying. Waking to the tune of a deafening crash, thrown out of their bunks and landing amid the wreckage of their cabins, they groped in the dark for the door. One of them found that it was impossible to open his, and it had to be chopped through by his shipmates before he could escape.

While all this was taking place, other exciting events were happening in the lower wards. At the first alarm caused by the crash of the explosion, every man able to help himself got out of bed and hastily began donning his clothes. Even as they grasped their clothes the signal on the ship's whistle was heard. Leaving everything, snatching their lifebelts from under their pillows or from off the racks overhead, and some a blanket, too, they made their way to the ladders, up which they passed to muster alongside the boat to which each was allotted. This left the wards and ladders clear for the medical staff and those told off to assist in the work of rescuing the helpless cases. By this time, although only three or four minutes after the explosion, some of the wards were already awash. Amid the sound of water roaring as it poured and spurted in, swirling round the feet of the rescue parties, there was no time to lose—no time to handle the badly-wounded men, the men with fractured legs, or men just recovering from a dangerous operation, with that extreme care always taken when they are embarked or disembarked. There was only time to lift them up from their beds in rough haste as possible, hurting



FRENCH SOLDIERS AS "STRETCHER" CASES ON DECK, ON THE WAY FROM DUNKIRK TO CHERBOURG.

them not a little, but hurting them to save their lives. Cries there were—heart-rending—when, as happened to some, a fractured limb was unavoidably refractured or twisted. To make matters worse, eight minutes after the crash, while this rescue work was going on, the electric light suddenly paled away, leaving only the dim illumination cast by the candle-lamps, which had been lighted at the first intimation of danger.

These candle-lamps were distributed throughout the ship on a liberal scale. This had been done before we left port, each lamp having a special place allotted to it, and a hook or socket on which to hang it.



THE "REWA'S" OFFICERS.

These lamps were our salvation. It would scarcely have been possible to have got off so free of mishap as we did, had we not had them.

As the helpless cases—about thirty in all—were carried up from below, they were passed into their boats, which had by that time been lowered to the lower deck rail, ready to receive them. The walking cases then took their places in the boats, and the medical staff and crew followed. Then, as each boat got its full complement, it was lowered into the water by the lowering party, under the orders and supervision of the officer in charge. (Each boat had two men as a lowering party. These men had each been drilled at lowering his own boat at every available opportunity while the vessel was in port.) As the boat reached the water, the falls were let go and unhooked from the boat. The lowering party then slid down the life-lines or boat-falls into their boat. The boat's painter attached to the ship was then cast off, and the crew pulled the boat clear of the ship, where, resting on their oars, they awaited events.

Needless to say, the ladies, four of whom were on board as nursing Sisters, were not forgotten. They were assisted into their boats—long before they wished to go—as soon as opportunity offered after the wards were clear, and theirs were among the first of the boats to leave. One of these most gallant ladies had the experience of being the only woman among a boatload of men; and many were the stories of how these same ladies shared their clothes with those in the boats with them, who had nothing more than thin pyjamas on, and were shivering in the bitter chill of a wintry night.

The lights which had been observed before the explosion were not seen again by those on board, nor was there any sign of fishing-boat or other vessel in the vicinity. Had those lights been shown by British or neutral ships, they would, without doubt, have come to our assistance, as, when last

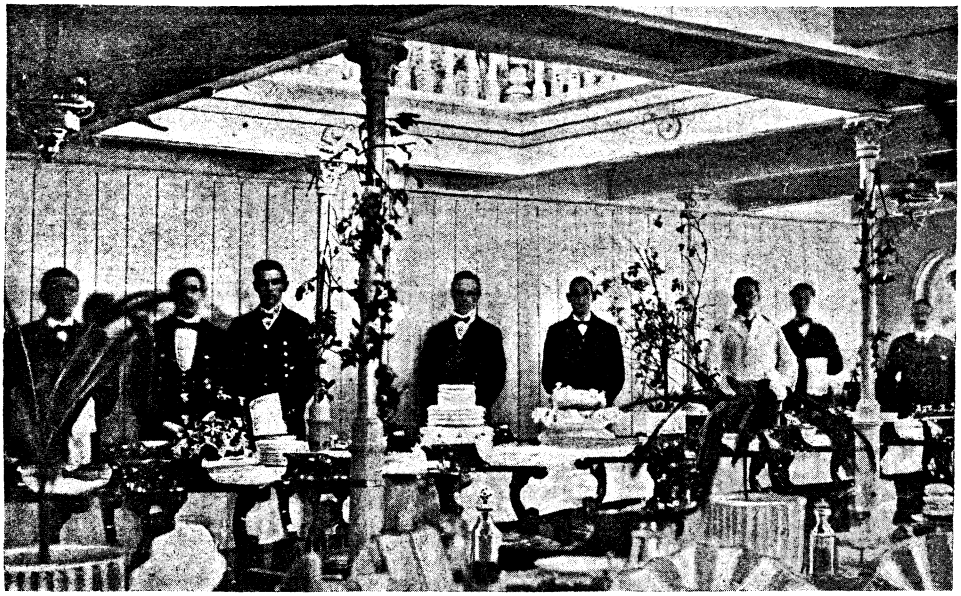
seen, they were so close that they could not have failed to observe our predicament.

As nearly always happens in times of danger, when one has been through the whole experience, a few deeds stand out, among many others of like nature, as being especially worthy of mention as in keeping with the traditions of our great nation. I will describe one or two as I saw them.

At a junction of two alleyways in the saloon compartment of the ship a man stood directing a stream of men groping their way in the semi-darkness to the decks above. "This way!" I heard him repeating as I passed. "This way!" What words of comfort to men weakened by wounds or disease, and half-stunned by the suddenness of their experience, groping their way by a none too familiar path to safety, away from that horrible noise of water rushing in to engulph them! Yet this man stood there, directing those who needed it until the last had passed to the decks above.

Another incident, though not in the same category as the above, is this. A boat was lowered into the water. The ship itself was still going slowly. As the boat touched the water, the forward tackle became unhooked; the after-end tackle remained fast and could not be unhooked, owing to the boat surging aft. The boat's painter had been cut by a splinter from the explosion; consequently, the stern being held by the after-tackle, the boat swung round broadside on and was in imminent danger of being capsized. The officer in charge, seeing the danger, sang out: "An axe is at your feet—cut the tackle away!" Acting at once, the man stationed at that tackle did as he was told. One blow of the axe, and the tackle was cut through, and fifty-odd persons were saved from an ice-cold bath, if nothing worse, by the action of that man, who kept his head in a moment pregnant with disaster.

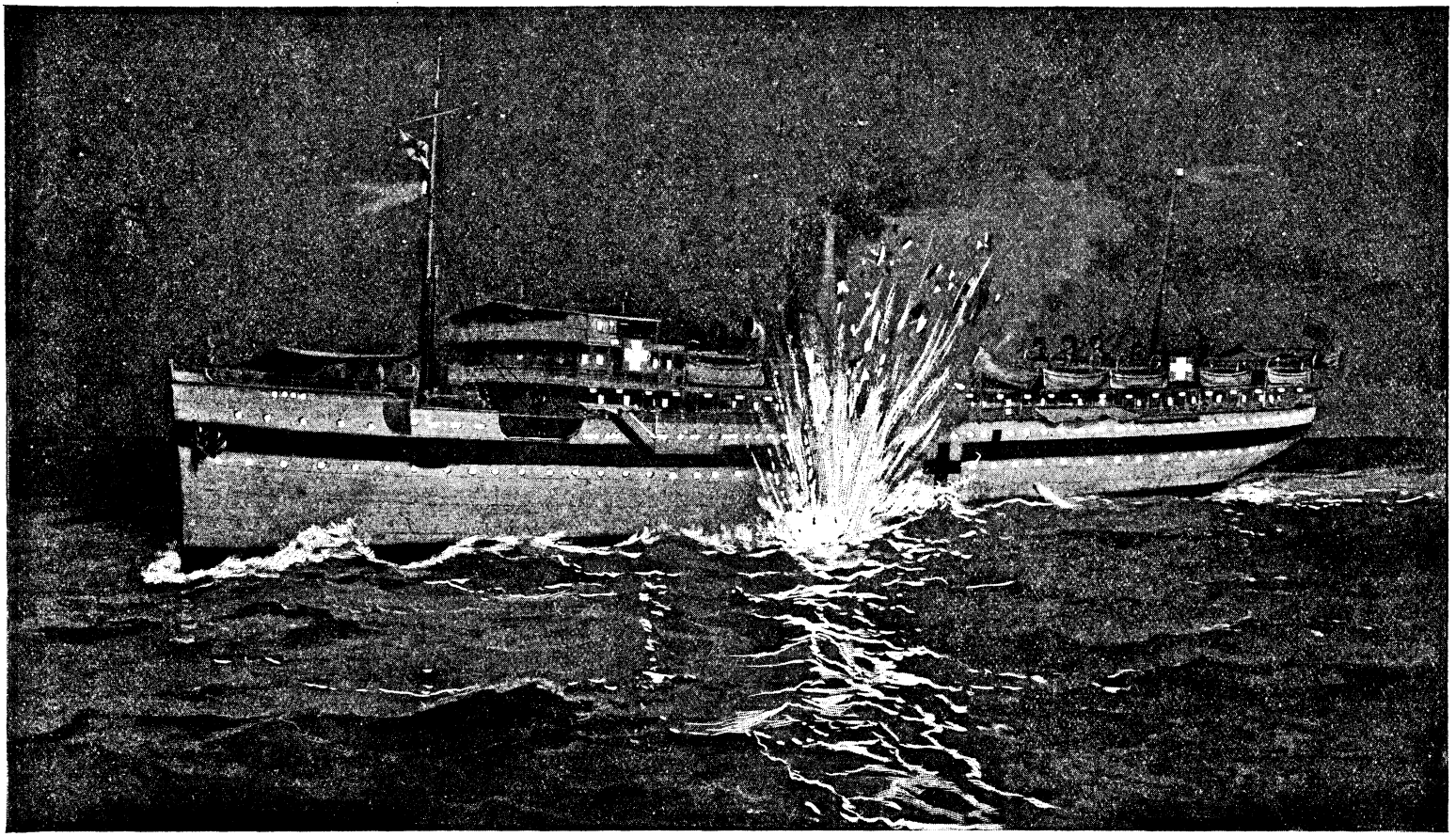
A sight which stirred the blood of all who saw—a sight which made me proud again of my countrymen, was the following:—



CHRISTMAS DAY PREPARATIONS FOR THE WOUNDED.

Some of the boats had been blown to splinters by the explosion. The men allotted to these boats lined up on the deck opposite the davits in which their boats had been. The ship was sinking under them, and boats were leaving as fast as they could be got away. These men remained standing at their "boat station" with never a murmur, two deep, an example of courage and abnegation. Not until the last boats came to be lowered could room be found for them.

Another scene will always remain with me. A few medical officers were standing on an otherwise deserted deck in a circle of dim light cast by the flame of a candle-lamp. A boat, all but ready to be lowered, hung in



THE "REWA" STRUCK: THE MOMENT OF IMPACT.

Drawn by Frederic de Haenen from material supplied by an eye-witness.

mid-air, full of men. There was room for only one more in the boat. As I came up to the little group standing there, I overheard these words: "Well, you're married, old lad—you go." Under the impression that this boat was the last one left, each of this little band was unwilling to take the one remaining seat at the expense of his shipmate. I lost no time in telling them that a boat with room for all was being got ready aft.

The ship maintained an almost even keel as she sank lower and lower in the water. This helped us enormously in the trying evolution of abandoning ship, and was the main factor of our success in doing so without loss of life. The absence of panic and the fine weather also contributed not a little, not forgetting the candle-lamps.

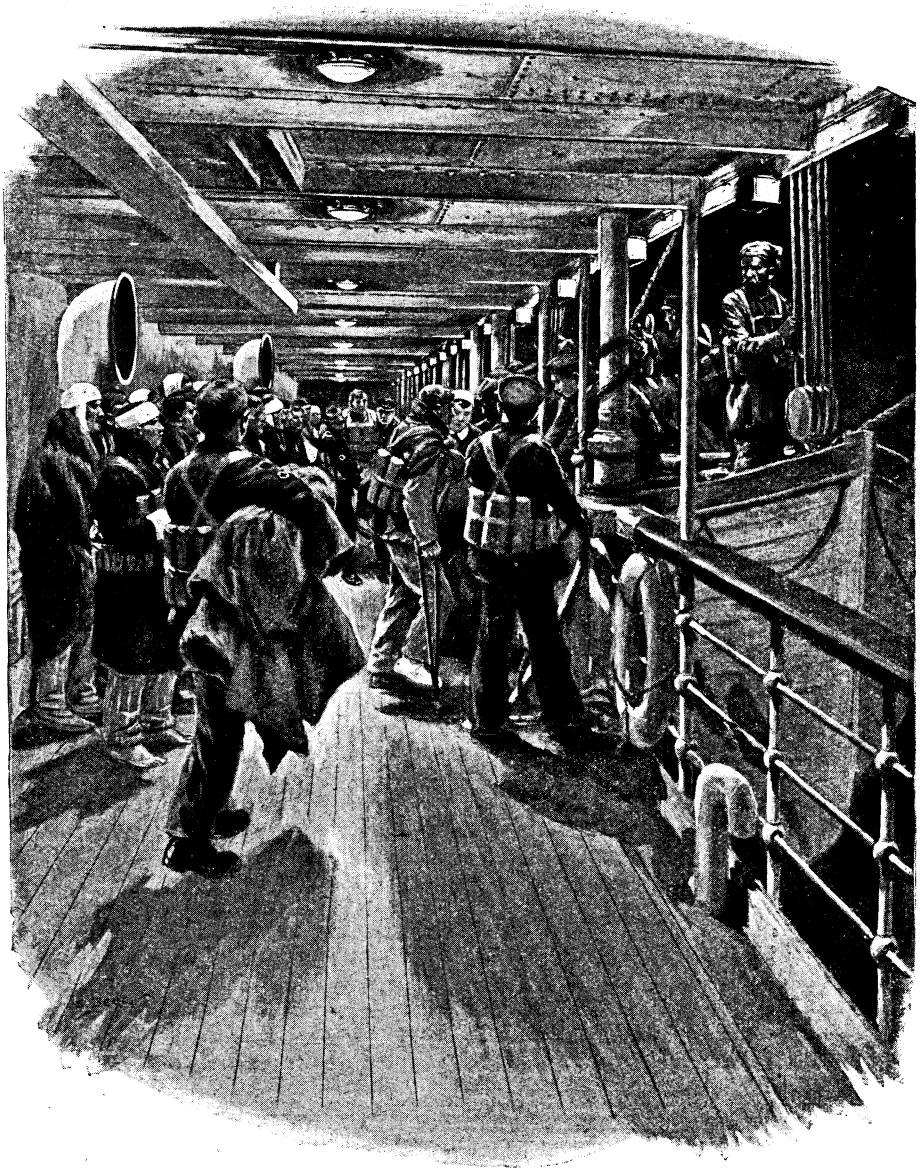
After all the other boats had been got away, our little band, consisting of the captain and senior officers of all departments, got to work on the one remaining boat and put her into the water. When all was ready, the captain, with another officer, made a last hasty visit to make sure that all were off the ship. It was an uncanny experience to feel that one was treading where no other man would ever put foot again, and all would be out of man's sight for ever in a few minutes. There was nothing more to be done. To get into the boat there was no need for ladder or rope—we practically stepped off the lower deck into it, and pulled away from the ship.

There is something about a ship's last moments, as she takes her final plunge, which fascinates breathlessly the onlooker. But when that ship is one of those whose name will for ever be associated in history as the victim of an unspeakably mean and treacherous crime, when the onlooker has served a long period in that ship, and seen her work of mercy to friend and foe alike, then, when such a ship sinks, the fascination pales to insignificance as the horror and the enormity of the crime creeps into the very marrow of the soul as the vessel disappears.

We were barely a hundred and fifty yards off the ship when the end came. She listed heavily over on her port side, amid a series of loud cracking explosions, with the sound of heavy objects carried away across her decks with a tearing, rending crash. She seemed to break amidships with an almost indescribable fury of noise, ending in a terrific crescendo, as the after-end plunged beneath the water, leaving the forward part gradually sinking in a silence which, save for the sound of water rushing into some empty compartment, seemed funereal after the tumult of a moment before. This part, too, now, almost silently, with only the bow and foremast showing, slowly disappeared—not, however, without a parting word from those she had carried through many a rough time, for as the waves hid her, "Three cheers for the good old *Rewa!*" sprang out from the throat of one who had known her well. "Hip-hip! Hooray! Hip-hip! Hooray! Hip-hip! Hooray!" And as an echo across the water, from out of the darkness



WOUNDED FRENCH OFFICERS ON THE WAY FROM DUNKIRK TO CHERBOURG.



THE RESCUING OF THE WOUNDED AFTER THE "REWA" HAD BEEN STRUCK: TAKING TO THE BOATS, A SCENE OF FINE DISCIPLINE AND COURAGE.

Drawn by S. Begg from material supplied by an eye-witness.

came the answering cheer which went resounding down the long scattered line of boats, "Hip-hip! Hooray! Hip-hip! Hooray! Hip-hip! Hooray!" growing fainter as the cheer was taken up by the more distant boats.

She had gone! A thought was given by us all to the providence of our escape. It was only too easy for us to imagine the utter ghastliness of being aboard amid the catastrophe we had just witnessed.

"Has anyone got a cigarette?" someone asked. This broke the tension of the moment, and was the signal for a general lighting up of smokes, for one had slipped a whole tin of them into his pocket as he left his cabin.

Manning the oars, under the direction of the captain, we commenced pulling in towards the land, twenty odd miles away. Communication was established with the other boats in the vicinity by means of flash-lamps, and all were ordered to follow our lead. We then burned a red flare, a box of

which was provided in each boat. In other circumstances the effect produced, as each boat—fourteen, including our own—in answer burned a flare, would have been admired as a beautiful, if weird, sight. But we were much too concerned in locating all the boats by their flares. "There's another!" "And another!" was all that passed, as the flares of the other boats split the darkness surrounding us, until we could count thirteen of them—thirteen crimson-red balls of light gleaming for about a minute, scattered widely apart about us, then darkness again. It was weird to see, but very comforting to know that at any rate, whatever the outcome for the present, none were missing who might have been saved.

We were continuing on our way, occasionally burning flares, when some time after three o'clock there loomed up out of the distant horizon the dark shape of a vessel. Then another one. We all felt a great relief when it was seen beyond question that these vessels had come to our rescue. Flares were burned again, to show them our position, and, pulling as fast as we could, we made towards the nearer one. She drew away from us to some of the other boats, and we were trying to overtake her, when still another vessel loomed into view. It did not take us long to reach her when she had stopped. She was a large ship, and they soon had ladders over the side. Laying the boats alongside these, we were soon climbing aboard. There was much help required to get on board those who were helpless. This was managed by the aid of ropes fastened round them. Men on board the ship pulled steadily on the ropes, while the men from the boats climbed the ladders and supported the patient from underneath on their rounded shoulders.

Five boats were thus relieved of their burdens by this ship, which proved to be bound to Swansea. She had received our wireless message, and with her escorting vessels—which were those we had first seen—had come to our rescue. It must have been three-quarters of an hour before we all got on board from these five boats, and, with them towed alongside, the ship proceeded.

Nothing could surpass the whole-hearted hospitality of the captain and all members of the ship, when we got on board. Every available cabin space, including the captain's and officers', was placed at our disposal. Hot coffee, food, clothing of all sorts, tobacco and spirits, quickly made their appearance to cheer the inner man.

Only one of the nursing Sisters was in the boats picked up by this ship. As not a few of us had abrasions or cuts to show, also as there were a few patients in a bad way, all needing attention, this gallant Sister, as soon as she arrived on board, set about attending to them—dressing wounds, giving out medicine, and what-not, the necessary gear being obtained from the emergency "first-aid" outfit carried in each boat which left the ship. For two hours or so this lady never faltered in her good work, not even stopping to drink a cup of coffee, which she sipped meanwhile. That she had been through a terrifying experience, and had been exposed to the rigours of a wintry night in an open boat, was hard to realise by her bearing. Everyone present could not but help admiring the splendid spirit of courage and self-sacrifice—which pervaded the whole nursing Sisters' staff—of which this lady gave us so fine an example.

After all had been made as comfortable as possible, we found a place to rest—on seats, in bunks, on the deck, in the cabins, anywhere. Some fell asleep, others conversed in whispered tones, and so the time was passed as the ship made way to her destination.

Soon after eight o'clock hot coffee and meat sandwiches were passed round, after which most of us went out on deck, to walk up and down, watching the escorting vessels. These two vessels had on board the people from our other boats, and, as occasionally they came nearer to us, a great deal of waving of caps and whistling was exchanged. Though we were "packed" on the vessel, we were in comparative comfort to those other survivors on the escorting vessels. Those, the ——— and the ———, had only accommodation for a very small number below-decks, which was utilised for the cot cases. The remainder had to keep out on the open decks, which, too, being very limited, allowed of no movement for keeping warm. The other three Sisters were on one of these vessels.

At last we arrived at Swansea, after a little delay, caused by a fog which had come on about an hour or so before. We were transferred to motor launches, and gave three cheers for the vessel we were leaving. How we landed amid a sympathetic crowd, were taken in motors to the hotels, private houses, and otherwise thoroughly welcomed, would take a volume of description itself.

KING ANDREAS

By EDGAR WALLACE

Illustrated by Maurice Greiffenhagen, A.R.A.

THERE were four generations of Seccondis, each one richer than the last. They moved in the best English circles, but they did not stay permanently in any. Two of the generations were exceedingly presentable persons, were Bachelors of Art and of Science, and a great deal besides. They endowed cottage hospitals and made generous contributions to charities. They had boxes at the opera, owned and ran racehorses, were to be seen at Cowes and at Ascot —though never in the royal enclosure.

Even to the fourth generation there was on the finger nail of every Seccondi a liver-coloured half moon just where nail and cuticle meet, and this was probably one of the explanations of Society's reluctance to clasp the Seccondis to its bosom; and though there was a Baron Seccondi of the Holy Roman Empire—Julius of that clan secured the distinction—not even the most careless of Society writers really believed that Seccondi was an ancient Italian title.

There was native blood in the family, as the finger nails betrayed, and there was bad blood, too, for there were at least four members of the family of whom the Baron never spoke, and as to whose fate there was some mystery. They had been traders on the Coast for twenty generations, they had been millionaire traders for four. Their stores filled the foreshores of twenty ports. They had agents from Dakka to Masamonese. They owned railways and ships, distilleries and slipways, whilst their mineral and forest rights mottled the intimate maps of five colonial foreign offices.

Andreas Seccondi, a brilliant young man—Scholar of Corpus Christi College, first-class Classical Moderations, second-class Lit. Hum., Barrister of the Outer Temple—had a career before him of the greatest promise. His wealth, his attainments, and his excellent manners were most certainly wasted in a one-horse Coast town which consisted of two hundred deplorable hovels, a strip of sand, two habitable houses, and the acrid scent of synthetic rum, which came from the low-roofed shacks in which Seccondi Ltd. maintained their stocks.

All sorts of theories had been put forward as to why Andreas Seccondi came to the Coast, but neither the most romantical nor the most uncharitable were well founded. Andreas left London and established himself in the gaunt white trading house because this hot, damp land called to him through his blood. The dominant voices of twelve unmentionable generations spoke to him in the decorous silence of his library in Hans Crescent. They whispered alluringly of firm, golden sands, of tossing palm fronds, of great heart-swelling forests, of broad sunlit rivers, of a licence and a freedom he had never experienced. Dark eyes laughed at him, the smoke which rises straightly from the fires of dawn were a sign and a summons, and he came to the Coast and lived what to him was a desirable life, at a temperature which ranged between one hundred and one hundred and four in the shade. All this was natural and proper, though wholly inexcusable from the point of view of his sometime friends.

He had arrived at Little Masam with an enormous equipment, including trunk-loads of clothing specially designed for wear in the tropics, patent tents, filters, mosquito destroyers, rifles—in fact, everything that a man who had designed a holiday in that most unlikely part of the world could need.

It is a curious fact that, although he was ordinarily abstemious, he had no sooner arrived on the Coast than he developed a taste for gin—a spirit which he had never drunk in his life. He sent home by the first mail steamer a requisition for the very choicest brands of this spirit, and consoled himself, during the time of waiting, by testing the quality of that strange liquor which was contained in square bottles also labelled "Gin," but which was especially manufactured for

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native consumption. He found it very hot and breath-snatching, but wildly exhilarating. When, three months later, many cases of the real article were landed on the beach and were duly sampled, he discovered the genuine article to be insipid and tasteless compared with that which was literally the gin of his forefathers, for on this square-faced poison the second generation of the millionaire Seccondis had added enormously to his wealth.

He lived alone and, what was worse, he drank alone. There were two white men on the station, who were the merest creatures of his house, the sort of men you buy for sixteen pounds a month and their "chop." He found them very dull, and their crudities offended him. So he removed from himself what might have been a brake.

Many representatives of the Seccondi family remonstrated with him, writing, cabling, doing everything, in fact, but coming in person; but their remonstrances were mild, because he was the richest of the Seccondis, and nobody wished to offend him. For his part, he took no notice of these letters and cablegrams, which he kept on his table, using as a paper weight a full bottle of "square-face."

About this time he began to draw heavily on his account which he kept at Cape Coast Castle. He had brought with him a hundred-ton petrol yacht, which was sent regularly every week to collect letters and exchange his cheques for gold and bank-notes. Why he should want money at all was a mystery, because the only store at which it could be spent was his own.

He made several excursions into the bush, unaccompanied by white men, and there were stories of drink palavers which the Seccondi family subsequently paid a great deal of money to suppress.

Twelve months after his arrival he rose from his bed, shaved and bathed, and sent for the store manager, whose name was Brown.

"I am going away, Mr. Brown," he said quite calmly.

He was sitting at breakfast, hollow-eyed and a skeleton of his former self, and the hand which carried the glass to his lips shook violently.

"Going away, sir?" said Mr. Brown, his heart full of happiness as his face was full of simulated woe. When you buy a man for sixteen pounds a month, you buy an actor, because people earning that salary cannot afford to show their feelings.

"I am afraid I have been a nuisance to you," said Andreas Seccondi apologetically, "but naturally, during the time of my probation, I was a little nervous. One never quite knew how the examination would go off."

"Quite so, sir," replied Mr. Brown, to whom the reference was incomprehensible.

"I haven't been very sociable," said Andreas, looking out of the window, "but then some of the papers were fearfully hard—the one I did last night particularly so. But, thank goodness, it's all over!"

Mr. Brown murmured his conventional sympathy.

"I am going to give you a thousand pounds," Andreas went on, "and I want to give your assistant five hundred. I have the money here." He pushed over a pile of notes neatly fastened together with a rubber band. "I think you will find it correct."

"But—but——" stammered Brown.

Mr. Andreas smiled.

"It is a little present," he said, "and I should be glad if you would make the presentation to the other man, because I am too bored to see him. Tell my engineer to load up the *Seagull* with petrol and sufficient food to last a week, and any letters that come for me you may return to the London office. I think that will do."

Mr. Brown, who had never had a thousand shillings of his own in his life, was moving light-headedly out of the room, when Andreas called him back. He turned, and saw on his employer's face a queer little smile.

"I must show you—I'm sure you will be interested," said Andreas. "I nearly showed you last week. Do you remember I had a package from Cape Coast Castle?"

"Yes, sir, I remember," said Brown; "it came by registered post. It was very heavy."

"You will understand why," said Seccondi.

He took a bunch of keys from his pocket, walked to a big unpainted cupboard which hung on the wall, and after many painful attempts he inserted the key in the lock and opened the door. He put in both his hands and took something out and placed it on the table, and Mr. Brown gasped and stared, as well he might, for the object which was being displayed to his astounded eyes was a crown.

From its jewel-encrusted rim to the emerald that glittered above its red velvet it was a rare and beautiful thing.

"It cost twelve thousand pounds," Andreas volunteered, "and I was in an awful state last night, for fear I didn't pass. Of course,



"With a quick twist the man placed the girl between himself and danger."

it would have been absurd," he said, with a little deprecating smile, "if I had got it out here, and then was ploughed at the last minute."

He pulled open a drawer in the table and brought out a thick wad of papers. They were covered with writing in his boyish hand, and Brown, who had had a fairly good education, recognised some of the problems. As Andreas turned the sheets, he saw that one "paper" was an essay on the Scandinavian Sagas.

"A little folk-lore," said Mr. Andreas, in explanation. "One has to work that up, because really there is very little difference between the folk-lore of the Viking and the folk-lore of the Coast. Thank Heaven, I pulled through!"

He replaced the papers and lifted the crown to his head, and stood for five minutes staring at himself in the glass; then this, too, was replaced in the cupboard and the door locked.

"I think you understand now," he said.

"Quite so, sir," said Mr. Brown untruthfully. "Naturally, sir."

"When you come to think of it," Andreas went on, half speaking to himself, "it is much better to rule a great kingdom like this than to occupy a minor position in a purely artificial society."

Mr. Brown quite agreed, and when Andreas told him that the object of his projected trip was to make treaties of alliance with neighbouring States, he nodded gravely.

"There are so many things to do, I hardly know which to do first," said Andreas. "Of course, if I am to be king, I must have some sort of state, but I have arranged for the building of a new palace at San Marthe. The difficulty I am in is to arrange a marriage. You see, Brown, it is impossible for kings to marry anybody but people of our own class, and the people here have so inter-married that it is just as impossible to discover a pure line. I am hoping, however, during the course of my trip, to eliminate that difficulty."

When Mr. Seccondi sailed in the *Seagull*, with his one native engineer and his own high thoughts, he did not take with him a single drop of liquor, a fact which Brown remarked upon. Moreover, before he left, Seccondi not only destroyed his own stock, but insisted upon every barrel of rum and every case of gin which was in the store of the company being destroyed.

"Drink does a great deal of harm to the country," he said, "and I am determined that it shall cease."

Mr. Brown stood upon the beach watching the *Seagull* until it was out of sight, and then he walked slowly back to his hut, carefully concealed his money, and drafted a cablegram to the second greatest of the Seccondis in London.

A hundred miles away Lieutenant Tibbetts, of the King's Houssas, had a platoon in the forest, wrestling with some brand-new tactical exercise invented in the Cameroons and cursed fluently by all commanders of native infantry, from Dakka to Massi-Kassi. Therefore was it cursed in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and even in Cape Dutch by commanders of native police on the Rhodesian border.

The man who invented these peculiar tactics is now dead. His name was Konrad von zer Hoffenzoll, and he was smitten sorely by a French ·75 shell at the intaking of Bomsubisi; but because in his life his system of rearguard defence in forest retreat had caused great annoyance to the enemies of his country, those enemies—and certain neutrals—sat down and elaborated his system, reducing it to cold print in five languages, in the wistful hope that they, in turn, would successfully employ the new system against the enemies that time would produce.

The Hoffenzoll rearguard defence concerns this story to this extent, that it caused Lieutenant Tibbetts, of the King's Houssas, to feel that the hand of the world was against him, that every door was shut in his face, and that he was the least considered of all junior officers.

On the third day of the exercise Captain Hamilton, his superior, strolled out to examine what was technically known as a checking redoubt.

He went over the work carefully; he inspected the trenches, the barricades, the machine-gun emplacement, the observing post and fire-direction platform, and when he had finished he said—

"The trenches are too shallow, the barricades should be protected by a spiked ditch, you have not given your machine-guns a good field of fire, and you should have cut down all the underbrush which would hide the approach of a flanking attack. In fact, my dear Bones, you have not displayed the foresight which is the essence of this system."

Bones listened with compressed lips. He had worked like a galley slave for three days. He had got wet to the skin, the night before,

in a tropical thunderstorm ; he had a bout of fever on him, and he was conscious of the fact that the point chosen for the establishment of the checking redoubt had been chosen—and ill-chosen—by Hamilton himself.

"Altogether, Bones," said Hamilton cheerfully, "it isn't a very creditable performance. It lacks foresight and imagination. To plan a successful rearguard action—well, you know what I mean—one must always know what the other fellow will do."

"I see, sir," said Bones.

Hamilton sensed the resentment and something of the genuine bitterness in the tone, and wished he had taken another line. Also he knew that he himself had been partly responsible for whatever error there was in the construction of the defence.

"I suppose it's my fault as much as yours," said Hamilton.

"Not at all, sir," said Bones, with icy politeness.

"March your men back. You'll be in time for tiffin."

Bones fell in his men, checked the entrenching tools and the equipment, and marched back to headquarters.

"I'm afraid I've peeved Bones," said Hamilton.

He was sipping at a long lemon squash before lunch.

"Poor Bones!" said his sister. "Is he awfully tired?"

"He hates things," said Hamilton, "and he hates me worst of all."

Sanders strolled out to them.

"How did Bones acquit himself?" he asked.

"Very well, sir, really. I chose the wrong place for the redoubt—I saw that the moment I arrived. The ground is bad—full of tree roots—and he couldn't very well get a field of fire for his Maxims without demolishing half the reservation forest. Hullo, here's his factotum! I suppose old Bones is sulking."

Ali Abid, the stout Arab who was to Lieutenant Tibbetts secretary and privy council, came to the stoep with a salaam.

"Sir," he said soberly, "Lieutenant is seriously imposed with supernormal temperature and accelerated pulsation. He excuses his society for grub."

"Is he ill?" asked Patricia anxiously.

"Leave him alone," smiled her brother. "He'll feel better later in the day. Poor old Bones! I've made him raw."

The girl looked dubiously from Ali to her brother.

"Don't you think we ought to do something—get him some chicken broth——"

Hamilton growled.

"Chicken! If you take any notice of Bones and his sorrows, you'll have no time for anything else. Come along—there goes the gong!"

Bones was not peeved in the ordinary sense of the term—he was genuinely hurt and genuinely unwell. He laboured under a sense of injustice which hit him in a moment of physical depression, and he was in that state of mind when less normal men think of suicide.

Ali Abid, with his profound knowledge of human nature, could see only one panacea for his master's distress. He busied himself over a ragout which was his great speciality. By the time Bones had finished a very excellent dinner in the solitude of his hut, he felt a little better physically and, as it naturally follows, in a more tolerant frame of mind. Nevertheless, the sting of the morning's interview had not wholly passed, and if he had the energy, he had not the desire to stroll back to the Residency, as he had so often done, and over coffee slip back to his proper place in the smooth-running social machine. He lit a cigar, read the last mail papers through, and, taking his stick from a stand, he made his way to the beach, intending to enjoy a long walk along the hard, level sands.

He came through the little bit of bush and rock which hides the beach from the reservation, and stopped. He saw a big white motor-boat, her nose grounded on the sand, and walking slowly toward him a young man well and carefully dressed. Such an unusual sight caused Bones to forget all his own personal troubles and quicken his steps toward the visitor.

"Good evening!" drawled the new-comer. "This is Mr. Sanders's headquarters, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir," said Bones, scrutinising the wan face in a vain effort to identify the visitor.

"You don't know me," smiled the man. "My name is Seccondi. I dare say you have heard the name. We are rather a nuisance to you people."

"Oh, the traders," said Bones in surprise.

"The traders," smiled the other. "I have not come to trade, but just to pay a little call. I am Andreas Seccondi."

"Glad to meet you," said Bones, and offered his hand.

He had all the white man's aversion to

that blood which was the distinguishing feature of the Seccondis. The native he understood and loved. The white man splashed with tar raised all his hackles. But, as against this, the Seccondis were a little different, and represented the phenomenon of inter-racial marriage. They were unique, not because they were very rich, not because the word of a Seccondi had before now blasted the career of a promising official, but because they were undoubtedly brilliant.

He wondered what brought the super-trader to the Territories, for Sanders did not encourage the Seccondis, and had successfully fought off every attempt they had made to exploit the hinterland. The young man appeared to divine his thoughts.

"I suppose you wonder what I am doing up here," he said, as he fell in by Bones's side on his way to the Residency. "I have a particularly interesting mission. It is hardly fair to tell you that much without telling you the whole," he laughed, "and I dare say you will hear about it in time."

He shot a swift glance at Bones, but in his present mood the young Houssa officer was not inclined to pretend to a knowledge which he did not possess. He was a little embarrassed that he should be compelled to go near the Residency at all, but his state of mind may be best judged by the very fact that his embarrassment was so slight that he was able to give a cool and unhumorous reply to the facetious little smile with which Hamilton greeted him. But the coolness of Bones was as nothing to the icy politeness of Mr. Commissioner Sanders.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Mr. Seccondi," he said in a tone that left no doubt whatever that nothing could be more unexpected than any pleasurable sensation at meeting the young man. He waited for Andreas to disclose his business.

"Can I see you alone for a little while?" asked the latter.

Sanders nodded and led the way to his private bureau.

"I don't like that man," said Patricia Hamilton, when he had gone; "there is something peculiar about him. Who is he?"

Hamilton waited for Bones, but Bones was silent, and the captain of Houssas briefly sketched the history of the House of Seccondi and the career of this, its most polished representative.

"They have coloured blood, of course, but I believe Andreas is rather a smart fellow, a barrister, and, so far as I know, remarkably well behaved."

"I have heard of him," said the girl. "He was staying with Lord Clayborough when I was at Henley, and I think I did meet him. Are you feeling better, Bones?"

"Never better in my life," said Bones cheerfully. "I don't think you want me, sir," he said, turning to Hamilton.

"Now, look here, Bones," said his superior, "I am awfully sorry for what happened this morning. I was in a very bad temper, and I was very unjust. You must admit, Bones, that you are at times rather a short-sighted ass——"

"I'll admit anything you wish, sir, if you will excuse me," said Bones freezingly, and, touching his hat to the girl, he strolled leisurely back to his hut.

Hamilton looked after him, shaking his head.

"I have got rather into the ribs of Bones, I'm afraid," he said.

"You're not exactly tactful, my dear," said his sister. "An apology with reservation is a new affront."

"Oh, blow Bones!" grumbled her brother.

"You're very rude," said Patricia tartly.

The family jar did not develop any further, for at that moment Sanders came out with the young man.

"I am sorry I have no sleeping accommodation to offer you," Sanders was saying.

"That's all right," said Andreas easily. "I have my yacht here, and she has very excellent accommodation. I will see you in the morning." He lifted his hat to the girl and made his way back to the beach.

"I cannot understand that fellow," said Sanders. "And what he is doing here, Heaven knows."

"Didn't he tell you, sir?"

Sanders shook his head.

"He has some kind of scheme on, about which he was frightfully mysterious. I know no more now than I did when I took him into the office. All I do know is that he is staying here for a few days. I had to ask him to come and take his meals with us. I hope you won't mind?"—he turned to the girl.

"I do not object at all," she smiled. "You see, I have not lived long enough on the Coast to share your feelings about the little patch of colour. I don't like him, but that is unreasoning feminine prejudice."

Sanders nodded slowly.

"I trust unreasoning feminine prejudice," he said, "before my own judgment. In this

case my judgment coincides with your instinct."

Andreas came to breakfast next morning, and was most interesting. He talked learnedly and modestly of things and people, was deferential to Sanders, polite to Hamilton, courteous and restrained in his attitude toward the girl, and made an honest attempt to be friendly with Bones, but Bones was not inclined to be friendly with anybody.

"I have heard a great deal about you, Mr. Tibbetts," said Andreas. "I am told you are one of the coming men on the Coast."

Bones glared at him.

Presently he tried again.

"You are an Etonian, aren't you, Mr. Tibbetts? My younger brother was at Eton and has often spoken of you."

Bones mumbled something, but gave no further encouragement.

On the second day of his stay Andreas sought out Bones and carried off that unwilling young man to the forest.

"Mr. Tibbetts," he said, "I am afraid I have annoyed you in some way."

"Not at all," said Bones stiffly.

"I wanted to discuss a matter with you," he said, "because you have initiative and judgment, and you have got just the qualities which I want."

"I think we are going to have some rain," said Bones.

"You have just the qualities I want," the other went on. "In fact, in this little Arcadian spot I have discovered the two things for which I have been seeking in my mind for the past six months."

"You surprise me," said Bones.

"The first of these," Andreas went on, taking no notice of the sarcasm, "is the man to control my troops."

"Your what?" Bones stopped and looked round at him in surprise.

"My troops. You know, of course, that I have had the authority of the British Government to raise ten thousand native soldiers?"

Bones gaped at him.

"Now, I can make you an offer," Andreas went on slowly. "You know the island of San Marthe?"

San Marthe was a tiny island about four hundred miles from the mainland, and chiefly remarkable for the fact that it was the property of Messrs. Seccondi Ltd. There had been a great talk about the use to which this fertile little land would be put, and some talk of a company being floated to cultivate cocoa palms. So far as Bones knew—which amounted to the sum of the information he had obtained from occasional visitors to the island—it was at present an uncultivated spot, inhabited by a docile tribe of natives, who supported body and soul with very little trouble, since the ground was wonderfully fertile, and fish and flesh and fowl were in abundance.

"I see you know it," Andreas continued. "I have built a villa there, and I am establishing the state which is naturally and properly mine. I want somebody to organise the army which I am raising, and you are the man for the job. As to the other matter"—he paused, fingered his chin irresolutely, and smiled—"I think we can get over the other matter," he said briskly. "Now, what do you say?"

"My dear old Seccondi person," said Bones irritably, "what the deuce has your army got to do with me?"

"Would you raise it and train it if I made you commander-in-chief at a salary of five thousand pounds a year?"

Bones stared at him blankly.

"Not for five millions a year. I don't know what your little game is, and I don't want to know. In the first place, Marthe is not a British possession, and, in the second place, I am a King's officer, and have no desire to change my boss."

"I was afraid you'd say that," said Andreas, turning back with a little shrug. "You see, I have everything cut and dried, all except the other matter."

"What is the other matter?" asked Bones, his curiosity getting the better of his repugnance to share the other's confidence.

"The other matter is the matter of the queen," replied Andreas soberly. "Naturally, if I am to be a king, I must have a queen. I hope to secure her by negotiation, but it seems unlikely that I shall succeed. We monarchs, Mr. Tibbetts, have a way of our own."

He spoke quizzically; his eyes, fixed on Bones, held a little gleam of laughter, and Bones was puzzled.

"I don't quite get you, my dear old Highness," he said, "but I gather that you are going to start a little Ruritania of your own, and you are thinking of getting married. Is that the idea?"

"That's the idea," said Andreas.

They were nearing the Residency now, and Andreas stopped, as though he wished to complete his disclosure before they joined the little party on the stoep.

"Well, what the dickens has it got to do

with us—your getting married?" asked Bones. "Of course, you're a very nice fellow, and all that sort of thing, but really, my dear old sportsman, we don't know very much about you, and we are not passionately interested in your private plans."

"That I realise," said the other; "it is a great pity." He sighed and shook his head. "I thought you might assist me in the other way. Can't be helped!" he laughed, turned abruptly away, and walked towards Sanders.

At dinner that night the conversation turned upon the speed of ships. Andreas was a mine of information on the subject, as was natural, since he owned the bulk of shares in two companies possessing between them a fleet of thirty vessels.

"Of course, you will never get the speed and the carrying capacity at one and the same time," he said. "Now, the *Seagull* is faster than the fastest destroyer."

"You mean your little yacht on the beach?" asked Hamilton in surprise.

He nodded.

"I can get thirty-eight knots out of her. Why don't you let me run you round the bay?" he asked.

Bones noticed that, as he made this suggestion, Seccondi's eyes dropped to his plate.

"Oh, do!" said the girl suddenly. "I have never been in a fast motor-boat."

Hamilton hesitated.

"I shall be glad," he said. "I suppose you would like to go, wouldn't you, Pat?"

"Oh, rather!" she cried. "It will be great fun!"

The prospect of the novelty overcame her feeling toward the man—a feeling which had worn off a little in the few days of their acquaintance, for his attitude had been faultless.

"Will you come, Bones?" she asked.

"I'm sorry—I've a lot of work to do,' mumbled Bones.

"Rubbish!" said Hamilton. "Come along!" But Bones was adamant.

He went to his hut that night, closed the door, lit the lamp, and sat down. He went over and over again his conversation with Andreas. It had left a curious uneasy feeling in his mind. There was something vaguely sinister in the revelation which Seccondi had made. He sat for two hours smoking, until the hut was blue with fumes, then rose, put out the lamp, opened the door, and walked out into the cool night air.

The sky was laced with stars; a screech of a distant night-bird and the roar of the river were all the sounds he heard. From the men's quarters came the hum of voices. Bones looked toward the Residency, then toward the hidden beach. He scratched his head, hesitated, then turned and walked slowly in the direction of the beach. . . .

* * * * *

"Bones!"

There was no answer.

"Bo-ones!"

The reservation wood echoed "O-ones!" but the cheery, albeit raucous, voice of Lieutenant Tibbetts, of the King's Houssas, was not heard in the land.

"Where the dickens has he gone?" demanded Hamilton wrathfully, and, indeed, his wrath was justified. For Captain Hamilton had walked on to parade for a miniature "general inspection" of his company, and instead of being greeted by two lines of men standing stiffly to attention behind a subaltern doing polite things with a drawn sword, Hamilton had found the company slackly "at ease."

As for the sworded subaltern, he was nowhere to be seen.

Therefore was Captain Hamilton compelled, contrary to King's Regulations, and to the immeasurable loss of his dignity, to search hut and Residency, and finally to go hotly to the edge of the still woods and—in his own language—"whoop for stragglers like a bally teacher at a Sunday-school picnic."

Hamilton came back by way of the Residency.

"Found him?" asked Sanders.

"I can't understand it."

"Here comes his man," said Sanders.

Stout Ali Abid, a linguist and a scientist, was waddling across the square.

"O Ali," greeted Hamilton, "where is my lord Tibbetti?"

"Master," said the man, "I regretfully report that Tibbetti is non est. Sleeping machine untenanted and pyjamas noticeably unoccupied."

"Hasn't he been in the hut all night?"

"Indications support that hypothesis," said Ali seriously.

"I can't understand that," said Hamilton, troubled. "I wonder if the young devil has gone up the river? Bones is rather hating me, I think. I shall have to speak to him very plainly. This is not the game."

Mr. Seccondi noticed the absence of Bones, which Hamilton excused in the terms of his theory.

"A very pleasant young man," said Andreas. "I was hoping that he would go out with us."

Hamilton observed that Mr. Seccondi was brighter and more cheery than he had been before, and, so far from the absence of Bones depressing him, it added considerably to his gaiety. After breakfast was over they made a move to the lower of the quays, where ordinarily the *Wiggle* was berthed. That staunch boat was now high and dry on a slipway, and undergoing repairs, and in her place were the long, beautiful lines of the *Seagull*.

"I have had a truant, too," smiled Andreas, as he stepped on board. "My engineer has taken a holiday. But you need have no fear; I understand this boat much better than Master Jacob."

He went down to the well of the boat, into the glass-covered engine-room, and Hamilton and his sister followed. The beautiful Deissler engine was a picture of burnished steel and glittering glass. Mr. Seccondi explained the functions of the various parts.

"She is one of the few engines fitted with a self-starter," he said. "I can control everything, even to the regulation of the petrol and oil supply, from the forebridge."

He led the way forrard, past a handsome little cabin, with its glass skylight and a glimpse of luxurious furnishing. Forrard of the cabin was a semicircular dais, protected by rails and a thick canvas screen.

"This is the navigating bridge," the proud owner explained, and showed them the rods and switches which controlled the engine, uncovered a jewel of a compass, and invited Patricia to test the small brass wheel.

Sanders had stood on the quay. He was not greatly interested in luxurious motor yachts, and had merely accompanied the party as an act of courtesy.

"I am afraid your helmet will blow off," said Andreas, suddenly turning to the girl. "Have you a motor veil?"

"There is one in my room."

"I'll get it for you," said Hamilton. "I had better get my cap."

"You will need it," said Andreas pleasantly.

Hamilton stepped ashore, and Andreas walked slowly along the alley-way on the side nearest the quay, all the time talking pleasantly to the Commissioner. The girl had strolled forward and seated herself amidst the cushions of a big cane chair, one of two which had been placed before the bridge.

"I flatter myself," said Andreas, as he strolled leisurely aft and threw off one of the mooring-ropes, "that this is a boat worthy of a king,"

He strolled as leisurely toward the nose of the boat, and, stooping, unhooked the second mooring-rope.

"Be careful," warned Sanders. "The river is running very strongly, and you will swing to midstream before you know where you are."

His warning was justified, for a space rapidly grew between the boat and the quay.

"My dear sir," drawled Andreas, "I know exactly where I am."

"Captain Hamilton will find it difficult to get aboard," warned Sanders again.

"He will find it exceedingly difficult to get aboard," said Andreas in his slow, even tone. "I repeat, I know where I am."

He stepped on to the little platform and turned a switch. Instantly the engine-room buzzed and hummed, and a streak of white froth appeared at the stern.

"I am in the company of the loveliest woman in the world, whom you shall know as the Queen of San Marthe," he said.

The truth flashed on Sanders and left him white. He dropped his hand to his side, but he was unarmed. He measured the distance. It was too far for a leap, but he made the attempt. He fell a few inches short, and dropped like a stone into the water. When he came up to the surface, the little vessel was rushing seaward with ever-increasing speed.

"Where is my brother?" said the girl. "What has happened?"

Andreas did not reply. He walked aft, scrutinised the engines, and favoured them with an approving nod. Leaning over the rail of the little "bridge," he looked down at her.

"My queen," he said, "you are on your way to your kingdom."

"What do you mean?" she gasped.

"I have found my kingdom. I have raised, or am about to raise, my army. I need only a queen, and the choice, my pretty lady, my Helen, my Cleopatra, has fallen upon you!"

He was not offensive, but there was something in his mien which was terrifying. She stepped back.

"Don't come near me!" she cried in a panic.

He laughed.

"I shall not hurt you, and whoever hurts you dies!" he smiled. "That is the order of King Andreas."

He walked toward her, fastening the wheel and leaving the boat to follow a straight course to sea. She put out her

hands to ward him back, and found her wrists gripped.

With a quick movement he flung his disengaged arm around her and drew her toward him. His lips were at her cheek when she heard a voice.

The man spun round and faced the level barrel of a revolver, and that revolver was in the hand of Bones. With a quick twist the man placed the girl between himself and danger.

"I fear we must die together," he said pleasantly—"a possibility which I had foreseen, Mr. Tibbetts. I suppose you know that you are trespassing, and that you have no right whatever on my yacht, and that you are liable to very heavy damages? You will, however," he went on, "be able to testify that my queen and I died royally, locked in one another's arms."

He edged the girl nearer to the rail, and, though she struggled, she was a child in the powerful grip of the madman.

Bones had a second to act. To shoot the man across the girl required a quality of marksmanship which he felt he did not possess. He had reached the control platform, and now, swift as a flash, he threw down the lever which he knew would stop the engine.

There would be no hope of rescuing the girl, once she was in the water, and there was only one chance, and that chance lay in disturbing the uncanny equanimity of the man.

Bones thrust forward his jaw, and into his eyes came that look of scorn which Andreas could not mistake.

"You dirty nigger!" snarled Bones.

The man stepped back as if he had been shot, and the girl stumbled forward to Bones's feet.

"You—you——" breathed Andreas, and dropped his hand to his hip.

Both revolvers cracked together, and Andreas Seccondi dropped limply to the white deck.

* * * *

"I don't know how to thank you, Bones," said Hamilton brokenly. "Poor old Pat! And yet I am awfully glad you didn't kill the poor brute. How did you come to be on board?"

"Dear old sir and officer," said Bones easily—he had recovered all his old jauntiness—"a little astute detective work, dear old sir, forethought and foresight. If you had been wandering about the beach at two a.m., and heard a semi-native gentleman instructing his wholly native engineer to make himself scarce in the mornin', and you had sneaked on board the yacht and seen a dark-looking white gentleman drinking champagne, with a golden crown on his head, and admirin' himself in an expensive looking-glass, and if you had looked through a skylight and seen him drawing up a marriage advertisement for the press, employing a highly-respected lady's name, you would have drawn your own conclusions, hidden yourself in a locker, and waited the moment to pop out. It's foresight, dear old fellow. You'll never get it, not in a thousand years, my poor old Ham; it's a gift that only comes to keen students of the Hoffenzoll rearguard defence."

"You are entitled to rub it in," said Hamilton, which was very true.

A further story in this series will appear in the next number.

THE DISCIPLE.

SHE has a little chime of bells;
Within her heart they swing,
Like music of a stream that wells
Out of a crystal spring.

She has a little flock of birds;
Her heart is all their nest.
With quiet words and simple words
She draws them in to rest.

She has a temporal star, so clear
That pilgrims who draw nigh
May hear the peal of bells, and hear
The sound of wings go by.

Her body is a temporal star:
Her soul the bells that chime:
Her spirit the white birds that are
Flown up at praying-time.

V. D. GOODWIN.

FAMILY PRIDE

By CAPTAIN THEODORE GOODRIDGE ROBERTS

Illustrated by J. Abbey

THERE had been a streak of the devil for generations in the Seydons. Perhaps I should not put it as strongly as that. Divil, instead of devil, spells nearer to my exact meaning. But in recent years poverty and other misfortunes had embittered this trait in certain males of the family, and changed it from a danger to themselves and their own affairs to a menace to the community at large.

Paul Seydon was weak, cunning, and bad-tempered. His sons were "bad actors" and evil thinkers. They were stronger than Paul, and in them the cunning of the sire had developed into sly dishonesty and the bad temper into vice.

There was a daughter also, and the neighbours who counted included her in the scorn and distrust in which they held the males of the family. There were some "no account" folk over on Musquash Brook, however, who would have spoken nothing but good of Kathleen Seydon, if they had spoken of her at all. But they were not of a talkative race, being Maliseet Indians.

Throughout the year 1916 Kathleen Seydon lived alone with her father in a weather-beaten frame house at the northern end of Seydon's Lake. Musquash Brook ran southward from the little lake for a distance of three miles into Racquet River, and about the junction of these two streams, on both sides of the larger, lay the fields and orchards and wood-lots, the grey barns and scattered farmhouses of Musquash Settlement.

Kathleen lived alone with her father for the sufficient reasons that her mother had departed this life several years before, and her two brothers were away. The brothers had gone away in a hurry in the early spring of 1914, to parts unknown, and few people, except the game-warden and his deputies, cared a rap where they had gone to. The country was well rid of them.

Kathleen had attended the little school at Musquash Settlement from her ninth year until the winter of 1911. Her father had been sent to the county gaol for a month at that time, as a slight recognition of his activities as a retailer of gin and whisky to the crews of a number of lumber camps. The girl, then in her fifteenth year, had refused to face her schoolmates after that humiliating incident in her father's career. From that time onward she had kept very much to her own family and the poor Indians on Musquash Brook for human companionship. With her brothers she had nothing in common save kinship, the roof over their heads, and the table at which they sat for their humdrum meals. She knew them for braggarts and knaves, and could find nothing in the character of either to inspire even the mildest glow of affection. She scorned their selfishness and dishonesty. When their unseasonable activities among the big game of the country drew the attentions of the warden upon them, and so led to their hurried departure, she felt no increase of loneliness. Towards her father, however, she entertained an affection that his unworthiness frequently dismayed, but could not kill. She loved him in spite of his faults, for the few virtues he possessed. And the chief of his virtues, and that which made the strongest appeal to her heart, was his very evident love for herself. And she did not fear him. Even his fits of bad temper did not daunt her, for they did not menace her. He was dishonest, weak, and shiftless, but he was neither cruel nor selfish. He understood certain of her dearest interests in life, such as her love of books, of birds and little animals, and her friendship for the poor Maliseets.

So for several years Kathleen and Paul Seydon lived by themselves in the house on Seydon's Lake. Visitors never dropped in for a meal. One or another of the Indians from the brook called occasionally and smoked a pipe in the kitchen. Neither father nor daughter ever entered a house in Musquash Settlement.

One evening in June, 1916, Paul Seydon

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went to the store at Musquash Cross-Roads for provisions. He returned at noon with an ill-tempered sneer on his weak and unpleasant face. He sat in silence by the kitchen door while the girl put the dinner on the table. Knowing him as she did, she asked no questions. He sat with the butt of a cheap cigar between his teeth, his hat tilted on the back of his head, and his lips twisted.

"Ready," said the girl.

Paul spat the ragged stump of tobacco out of his mouth and took his seat at the table, having first removed his hat and tossed it to the floor. Uncouth as he was, he had never been known to wear his hat at table, even in his worst moods. His sons had not been so particular. On more than one occasion Paul had uncovered their heads by force.

"Saw Jim Bristow to-day," he said, with a sneer that was almost a snarl.

Kathleen frowned slightly. She detested her father's habit of sneering at better and more successful men than himself. When he raved and swore he was more dignified.

"Stood shoulder to shoulder with him in the store," continued Seydon. "And did he pass the time of day with me, d'ye think? Not on yer life! Didn't so much as look at me. I might have been Lunt's dog, for all the notice he took of me."

"But why shouldn't Mr. Bristow pass the time of day with you, or even look at you?" asked the girl. "You two have been enemies for years, and it was you who began it. You have often told me so."

"I began it, d'ye say?" exclaimed Paul. "I began it! And what about his old man, Nick Bristow? Now, look here, girl, ye'd best get this business straight in yer mind! I've told ye all about it often enough, but, for all that, ye seem set on layin' the blame on me."

He glared across the table at her. She smiled back wearily, with amused pity in her proud, vivid young face. He placed his hands on the table.

"Look at these hands, Kathie Seydon!" he cried.

"They are not very clean, father," she said.

He snatched them back to the edge of the table.

"They are gentleman's hands, clean or dirty!" he exclaimed. "My father's were the same shape, and his father's, and ye've got them, girl—the Seydon hands. If mine ain't as white as my grandfather's were, it's because I work with them. I work with them because old Nick Bristow, the psalm-singing, penny-pinching bloodsucker, ruined my father—yer own grandfather! Aye, that's the truth, and yet ye sit there, Kathie Seydon, and side with that man's son against yer own flesh and blood! Where's the schooling that should be mine by rights, and yours, too, girl? Where are the timber-lands and farms that were granted to my great-grandfather? The Bristows have them! And look at us!"

"I am tired of hearing about it," said the girl. "What good would all that land have been to us? You have more now than you can work, because you don't try to work it. And you talk as if Nick Bristow had robbed grandfather. That is not true. Grandfather sold the timber and the farms to Mr. Bristow, and spent the money like a fool, as you have told me yourself. He called himself a gentleman, and thought it a fine thing to drink too much and eat too much, and ride his horses to death. He would have done better if he had worked in his fields with his wonderful hands—better for himself and better for his name. And why didn't he spend some of his money on sending you to school, instead of letting you run wild as a partridge?"

Paul Seydon swore. It sounded very futile. Then he ate in silence for several minutes, swallowing the perfectly good food with an air of scorn and dislike. He needed it, however, and, but for his temper, he would have enjoyed it.

"I wouldn't stand for such talk from anyone else," he said at last. "But I've spoilt ye, my girl."

Kathie smiled. Her father took heart.

"And there was Jim Bristow bragging away to Lunt about that fool boy of his as if he was the whole British Army," he continued, "and me standing there all the time without getting so much as a look—me, mind ye, whose grandfather raised a regiment and fought George Washington!"

The girl's fine eyes seemed to at once brighten and darken.

"What did he say about Eric?" she asked.

"Eric?" queried Paul. "That's the young pup's name, is it? Well, the ups and downs of this world beat all! He went to college in Fredericton, just like my boys should have done, if they'd had their rights. I saw him once, when he was home for his holidays—met him on the Mast Road—and a softer, sillier-looking young dude I never set eyes on. It seems they made him an officer, quite a while back, if Jim Bristow ain't lying about it."

"Don't be silly, father!" exclaimed the girl. "You know that is true. We read it in the paper, copied from *The Gazette*. What else did his father say about him?"

"Ye seem almighty interested in him," he sneered.

"Yes," she answered steadily. "He was a nice boy—a kind boy—and now he is a brave man. Don't you remember the day he drove me home from school in that terrible snowstorm—long ago, when I was only twelve."

"That was nothing," said Paul. "Anyone would have done as much for any girl."

"Anyone, perhaps, except either of your sons," she retorted.

He banged his fist on the table.

"Ye're right there!" he cried, with an oath. "But those boys are not human, and never were. Why, darn it all, yer grandfather jumped into Racquet River once, when the ice was running, to pull out a little Injun girl; but those brothers of yours, Kath, wouldn't risk their hides nor a hair of their heads to save yer life nor mine. They'll run risks for money to spend on rum, but on nothing else under God's heaven. And here is Jim Bristow's son—grandson of that store-keeping old money-lender Nick—just had a medal pinned on to him by the King of England! The Seydon family has gone to the dogs, that's a sure thing! The Seydons are down and the Bristows are up."

The girl laughed.

"You are really absurd," she said gaily. "You talk as if the world is so small that there isn't room for the Seydons and Bristows to be up or down at the same time. We have sunk pretty low, I'll admit, but you know in your heart that we'd have gone just as low if there had never been such a person as Nick Bristow."

She left her chair and went around the table to her father's side. She laid one of her slender brown hands on his shoulder.

"Now, cheer up, father, and tell me why the King gave a medal to Eric Bristow," she said.

Paul glanced around at her, and the sneer faded from his weak mouth.

"I'm not altogether a fool," he said slowly—"that is, not in my mind. I know what I am, and I know that ye're too good a girl to be my daughter. Ye're the real thing. I don't understand it, but I thank God for it. I wonder how ye put up with my miserable ways—how ye can stand the sight of me, day after day, and my mean temper. Why, Kathie, ye're like the Seydons were a hundred years ago, only better!"

Her eyes dimmed. She kissed him tenderly on the cheek.

"I lead you a dog's life—a regular squaw's life," he continued, turning his head away and staring straight to his front. "I—I got a low streak in me, girl—a yellow streak. The devil only knows where I got it from!"

He squared his shoulders and laughed.

"Ye'd like to know about young Bristow, is that it?" he continued. "Well, from what I heard his father saying to Lunt, he was in a big fight one day, and put it all over the Germans. They were shooting people up with a machine-gun, and he got in on top of them and did them in. There ye have it, Kathie. But why are ye so darned curious about that young Eric Bristow? What's he got to do with you? Poor as I am, and low as I have fallen, no Bristow on top of God's earth is worth ye bothering yer head about. Let him get his medals! Let Jim Bristow brag and stick out his chest. Medals are all luck."

The girl smiled to herself. Her eyes and cheeks were very bright, but her father did not see. She put an arm about his neck.

"I am glad he has won honour," she said. "I had a feeling that he would. I have been interested in him ever since he was so kind to me in that snowstorm, when I was twelve years old."

Paul looked around at her inquiringly.

She stood very straight then, and met and held his glance with her beautiful, fearless eyes. Her cheeks were very pink.

"And since then—I have seen him since then," she continued. "I often meant to tell you, father, and then I always changed my mind, knowing that you would only sneer and swear."

"How often?" he asked.

"Three times."

"Three times! I'd think yer pride would keep ye from having any truck with a Bristow."

"My shame did," said the girl. "Soon after I stopped going to the school he met me and asked me why. It was when you were in gaol, father. He said I was the nicest girl in the Settlement. And once, when he was home from college, he met me, and then he told me I was the nicest girl in the whole Province. And he wanted me to write to him. But—but how could I? He said that breaking the game laws wasn't really a very great crime, but I knew that he said that only to be kind to me. And just before he went away, to go to the War, I met him on

the Mast Road. He said then I was the nicest girl in Canada, and he asked me to write to him. But I wouldn't."

"As he thought ye so darned nice, why didn't he come courting ye openly and honestly?" demanded Paul, with the sneer suddenly on his lips again, and the wicked, silly anger like a fire in his eyes.

"He begged me to let him," she answered steadily, "but I refused. My shame made it impossible."

"No, it was yer pride!" exclaimed Paul.

"Then pride and shame are but two names for the same thing," she said.

The sneer faded again from the father's lips, and the fire went out of his eyes. He sat hunched in his chair, looking curiously miserable and subdued. He had been right when he said that he was not altogether a fool in his mind, and there was still some sanity in his heart, too.

II.

THE seasons wore on, ripening to autumn and freezing to winter, but they brought no word of the boys to the game-warden and his deputies, who were the only people in the country anxious to hear of them.

Early in September James Bristow was officially advised that his son had been seriously wounded. Many people heard of it immediately from him, and others saw it later in the newspaper.



"He let it fall to his feet."

Kathleen Seydon read it in the newspaper.

In October Musquash Settlement and the country around learned that Eric Bristow



was out of danger of death, and in November the word got about that he had been granted three months' leave to Canada.

Early in December Paul Seydon received a letter from a small town across the border, signed by his son Tom, demanding a postal order for twenty-five dollars by return. It was a brief letter, but menacingly worded. It was intended to frighten Paul, but, for a wonder, it didn't. His sons had been away for so long that he had lost his old fear of them. So, instead of being frightened by the letter, he was filled with a stubborn anger. His first impulse was to show the communication to Kathie, and expound to her, with sneers and oaths, his views on the character and manners of his son Tom; but, on second thoughts, he tucked the letter into the front of the kitchen stove. Then he went to his room and dug his pocket-book from the interior of the straw mattress of his bed. He had first learned the wisdom of keeping it there when Tom was twelve years of age. It contained eight five-dollar bills. He put six of these in his pocket, and returned the others to the hiding-place. Then he told Kathie that he was going to the Cross-Roads to buy some tobacco. She gave him a list of groceries to buy also. He harnessed a horse into the red pung and drove away.

Paul got back in time for supper. He stabled the horse, and entered the kitchen with his arms full of parcels. He placed everything on the floor. One parcel was big and soft and flat.

"Well, I've spent a mint of money," he said, "and I enjoyed spending it."

Kathie looked at him anxiously, but saw that he had not been drinking. Also she saw that he was very well pleased with himself.

"What have you bought?" she asked, removing the paper shade from the lamp, so as to illuminate the parcels.

"Well, I bought the groceries," he said. "Then I bought a curry-comb. Then I blew myself to a new pipe and some tobacco. Then I found I had twenty-five dollars left in my pocket."

"Twenty-five dollars?" repeated Kathie. "Why did you take so much money with you?"

"Well, you see, Tom wrote me to send him that sum of money," replied her father. "It was a real sharp letter. He wasn't going to stand for any nonsense from his poor, worthless, cowardly old man. So in I went—and spent it on a present for you. There it is, Kathie—that big, flat one. I reckon it will fit, because Susan Lunt tried it on in the store, and she is just about yer size."

She knelt and opened the parcel, then sprang to her feet with a coon-skin coat in her hands. She slipped it on, and it fitted her slender body to a wish.

"It cost more than twenty-five dollars, I know," she said.

"A load of hay more," admitted Paul. "I'll haul the hay in to Lunt to-morrow."

"But why did you buy it for me?" she asked.

"Well, because I knew ye'd like it, and to show Tom where he gets off at, and to show young Bristow that he's not the only person who knows a fine girl when he sees her," he replied.

She put her arms around his neck and kissed him.

"I love it," she said.

Eric Bristow reached home a week later. In the afternoon of the next day Gabe Solis, a twelve-year-old Indian boy, arrived at the house on Seydon's Lake, and found Kathie alone in the kitchen. He removed his mittens and warmed his hands at the stove. Then he produced an envelope from somewhere among his clothes and gave it to Kathie.

"A man gimme a dollar to fetch this to ye," he said.

The envelope was addressed briefly "Miss Seydon."

Something of the sort was not entirely unexpected by the girl. She guessed the origin of it and the nature of its contents at a glance, and yet she held it limp in her hand for a full half-minute, staring at it dully, her eyes, her nerves, and her wits alike shocked to confusion by stress of emotion. At last she turned away. With trembling fingers she tore the envelope open and drew out the folded sheet of paper.

"Knowing that the kindness of your heart is greater than your pride—just as it is more sane—I send this to tell you that I shall patrol the Mast Road to-night from ten o'clock until I meet you. A great deal of foolishness is going on here, but I shall run away from it before ten o'clock. I have lived for this—to see you again! And I have something very important to tell you.—ERIC."

She read it and re-read it again and again. Now the words merged as if they had been written in running water; now they stood clear and black. But "I have lived for this" glowed always in letters of fire. Her mind was overwhelmed with the phrase. He had lived for this—for a sight of her! Through weariness and peril, in the midst of despair and pain and death, he had lived for a meeting on the Mast Road! Her imagination glimpsed something of it, then lost the light. She went trembling from the kitchen to her own room, pressing the letter to her face, leaving the little Indian boy warming his hands unconcernedly at the stove.

In her room she stood motionless for a little while, now pressing the letter against her young breast.

"He knows it is not pride," she whispered. "But it is like him—in his dear kindness—to pretend it is pride." And then: "God, do not let my shame break my heart!"

She went back to the kitchen and gave the boy something to eat, and a bag of apples and cakes to take home to his brothers and sisters.

During supper Paul talked about almost everything except the excitement in Musquash Settlement caused by Eric Bristow's return. He was really trying to be agreeable to his daughter. He had suddenly realised her loneliness and the emptiness of her life, and he felt both pity and remorse. He looked at her there, in the light of the poor lamp, and hated the Bristows and their heroics and prosperity, and he scorned himself. But for him, his girl would be on her way to the party even now—to that party and all it stood for. But she sat alone with him, an outcast like himself and his sons.

At half-past nine Kathie put on her hood and fur coat. A half-moon and a thousand stars lit the frosty world outside.

"I am going for a walk," she said.

As this was not unusual, Paul made no protest and asked no questions.

Kathie followed the sled-track over the white expanse of the frozen, snow-buried lake. She followed it to the lower end of the lake, then up the bank to the left, and through the heavy woods of spruce and fir. This was the old Mast Road. Now it was beaten only by the runners of Paul Seydon's sled and the hoofs of his horses, but in the old days, before the great pines had all been cut out of that country, it had often been as busy as a highway.

Kathie rounded a curve in the road, and halted suddenly at the sight of two human figures. One, almost a hundred yards away, approached, walking in the middle of the moonlit track between the black walls of shadows. The other stood in the shadow beside the track, not twenty yards away. The girl also stepped into the shadow. She moved forward cautiously. She saw that the man in the shadow was her brother Tom, and, looking beyond, she knew the man who approached, walking honestly in the middle of the track, was Eric Bristow. She drew off the mitten from her right hand, and slipped the hand deep into the side-pocket of her coat.

Eric Bristow halted, staring into the shadow, but not at the girl.

"Is that you, Kathie?" he asked.

Then Tom Seydon stepped into the track.

"No, it ain't Kathie," he said, "but it's one of the family. She couldn't come, but I got something from her for ye."

The girl saw a short, heavy stick in his right hand, held close against his leg. She drew her hand from her pocket and darted into the white road.

"Turn around, Tom Seydon!" she cried. He turned with a jump.

"Do you remember the automatic pistol you left behind you?" she asked. "Well, this is it, and I can shoot. Throw that stick down and get out, or I'll show you!"

Tom glared at her, speechless. Young Bristow drew near.

"Keep away from him!" she cried. "He is dangerous as a snake. He may have a knife. Drop that club!"

He let it fall to his feet.

"This is my brother Tom," said the girl bitterly. "I have not seen him till now since he ran away from the law long ago, but I know that he has come back to try to frighten money out of his father. But he saw you, and he meant to club you and rob you. Oh, I know him! He is my brother!"

Bristow fumbled in the front of his overcoat, then moved close up to the dumfounded Seydon. "Here is some money," he whispered. "But for the respect I have for your family, I'd hand you over to the law. If you ever cross my track again, I'll do you in! Now beat it—all the way back to where you came from."

Tom Seydon looked at the money in his hand, pocketed it, then moved quickly along the road. Eric watched him out of sight, but the girl stood with her face hidden in her hands. Eric turned and ran to her.

"I want to tell you that things like that mean nothing to me," he said, his voice harsh with emotion. "I have seen too much to care at all, one way or another, for such things. Kathie, I only know that you are the dearest girl in the world. I have seen you always, and wanted you, awake or asleep. When I was happy I thought of you. When I was near death I thought of you. What does it matter to me, or to you, that your father and your brothers have broken the little laws of this country? What does it matter that one of your brothers was ready to club me for a few dollars? Kathie, speak to me!"

But she did not move nor lower her hands from her face. He took off his gloves and placed his hands tenderly on her wrists.

"Dear," he said, "you love me, but this beastly pride keeps you from telling me so. Listen to me. One day my regiment got a draft of new men, and twelve of them came to my platoon. I knew one of them the moment I saw him, though he called himself Davis. I made a good soldier of him. It was in his blood. His eyes were something like yours, Kathie, and I loved him for that. He died on the Somme, fighting. His name wasn't Davis, but David Seydon—as good a soldier as anyone, but he was killed."

Kathie's hands slipped down from her tear-wet face, but he continued to hold her wrists.

"David went out and fought, and was killed?" she queried.

"It is God's truth!" he said. "As true as the stars shine—as true as I love you!"

She did not move, but her eyes shone upon him brighter than starshine reflected from still waters.

He put his arms about her shoulders then and drew her close to him.

"Tell me," he said. "I have told you so often."

"I have loved you ever since I was twelve years old," she whispered.

A DESPERATE REMEDY

By WILLIAM CAINE

Illustrated by Bertram Prance

THE clouds which had concealed the tors since the previous morning had crept down to the river long before Mr. Algernon Sprott, Warden of St. Erth's College, Oxford, reached the Moretonhampstead Road where it crosses the Cherry Brook. Mr. Sprott, however, had been in no way alarmed, because, while mist on Dartmoor is a dangerous thing, it has no terrors for anyone who sticks to the main roads and the rivers. Mr. Sprott had been fishing up the Cherry Brook all morning. He knew that ultimately he must come to the bridge, and that then he would have only to turn to the left along the road, and follow it, to be led without possibility of error to Two Bridges and dry stockings.

So when at last he attained the guidance that he expected, he was in no hurry to make use of it. The combination of early warmth, which had brought out the fly, and absence of sunshine, arch-enemy of the unskilled angler, had resulted in the capture by the good gentleman of no less than three splendid trout, none of them under the statutory six inches, and Mr. Sprott was prodigiously pleased with himself. He felt that his basket would make his wife Cecilia open her eyes when he should exhibit it to her. Cecilia had been a little sceptical about the ability of a perch-fisher—which Mr. Sprott had hitherto been—to catch the fishes of Dartmoor, and his total lack of success during the previous two days had seemed to confirm her in her low opinion of his chances. But now—well, now Cecilia must confess herself wrong, and the thought made his heart light, for unless Cecilia or someone else was in the wrong, Mr. Sprott could never be perfectly comfortable.

When first the mist had begun to gather about him, he had made up his mind to take the road for Two Bridges as soon as he should reach it; but his success with the trout had led him to revise this decision. "It is as simple," he told himself, "to find one's way down stream as up, and whether I am below the bridge or above it is a point of no importance. I can fish beyond it with a perfectly easy mind, secure in the knowledge that the stream will bring me back to it and the road, whenever I shall wish to be moving homewards. I will do so. But first I will have my sandwiches when I reach the bridge. Yes, let my arrival at the bridge sound my luncheon-bell."

Smiling at his own whimsicality, he continued to ply his rod and his feet, and at last was gladdened by the sight of the bridge looming through the white vapour that hid the world from his eyes.

"Ha!" cried Mr. Sprott happily. "Here we are, then. And now for the reward of prowess!"

So saying, he unslung his creel and took out of it a folding waterproof seat, which he spread on the bank close beside the bridge. Then, lowering his tall and portly form carefully upon it, he produced from the creel a number of small paper parcels, and from his hip pocket a flask of good old brandy. These things he set out in a row, and then, taking up the packages one by one, undid the strings which secured them, opened them out, and set them back upon the turf.

"Ha," said Mr. Sprott, when this ceremony was brought to an end, "let us consider. Yes, Cecilia and the head waiter have done well by me this morning. Four sorts of sandwiches—sardine, egg, cheese, and cress. Two kinds of cake—plum and Madeira. Various biscuits, sweet and plain—macaroons, Bath Olivers, Osbornes, cracknels and wheatmeals. A pat of butter and a

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knife, a pot of strawberry jam, and—yes, salt. Cecilia never forgets the salt. Last, but not least, a wing of chicken, three slices of tongue, and a wedge of pork pie. Come, I shall make a famous luncheon, I see!"

"I suppose," said a voice immediately above his head, "that you wouldn't care to let me help you?"

Mr. Sprott directed a surprised and angry glance upwards—no one likes to be overheard indulging in soliloquy—and perceived the head which a youngish man had protruded beyond the parapet of the bridge. He wore a round cloth hat, a very dirty collar and a knitted silk necktie, and his chin and lips were rough with a dark, sprouting beard and moustache.

The impudence of the proposal deprived Mr. Sprott for a moment of breath, and the young man took advantage of this to vanish and reappear instantly round the side of the bridge. He revealed himself as a small, spare man dressed in an ill-fitting knicker-bocker suit of rough yellow tweed, which was caked with mud and sodden with water. In his hand was a stout stave.

"I'm as hungry as the devil," he continued at once, "and though I expect I can stagger along for another half-hour or so, I'm feeling a little rocky. A couple of those sandwiches of yours, sir, would put me all right till I can get to a square meal. I've had nothing but a stick or two of chocolate since this time yesterday. I've had the very deuce of a time."

Mr. Sprott bent a disapproving gaze upon this intolerable person. A consciousness of his own dignity and of his superiority in size to the other made his tones very stern as, "Sir," he said, "your voice is cultivated, or I should have every reason to suppose that you have never learned manners. Permit me to tell you that gentlemen do not invite themselves to share the meals of total strangers in the very free-and-easy fashion which you think fit to employ. My luncheon, I may inform you, is sufficient for my own needs, but it will not serve to contribute to those of a person who knows no better than to force his society upon one who does not desire it—who does not, I repeat, desire it, sir!"

So saying, he bit into a cress sandwich. He was, and looked, aware that he had administered a well-merited rebuke. Well-merited rebukes were a speciality with Mr. Sprott.

"Come," said the other appeasingly, "don't let us get stuffy with each other. Perhaps my really desperate appetite made me forget that we haven't been introduced. I'm sure I'm very sorry if I've offended you. So call quits, like a dear man, and tell me that I may fall to. Permit me, though, first, to tell you that my name is——"

"Sir," thundered Mr. Sprott, "you may *not* fall to! And I do not care a button what your name is."

The young man in yellow tweeds grew suddenly very red in the face.

"You greedy bounder!" he exclaimed passionately. "For twopence I'd——"

"Have a care, sir!" cried Mr. Sprott stoutly, turning, nevertheless, a little pale. "I am not a young man, but I am not deficient in muscular strength. Have a c-care, sir, how you threaten the Warden of an Oxford college!" And he grasped his landing-net in a very resolute fashion.

The young man laughed. "By Jove," he said, "you're a specimen that's worth a little study! Dashed if I don't sit down and watch the animal feed!" And he sat down, not far away, and fixed his bright blue eyes upon Mr. Sprott.

"As you please, sir," said Mr. Sprott. "The Moor is free to all, and I have no power to forbid you to sit there. So long as you remain at that distance I am content. But I do not propose to let your presence interfere with my enjoyment of my meal." And very deliberately he finished his cress sandwich and took up one with egg in it.

"Ah," said the young man suddenly, "the person I borrowed these clothes and stick from this morning was just as courageous and unaccommodating as you are. That's the disadvantage of being short—people assume that one has no strength. Well, that poor thing made his mistake. But he won't make any more, and I hope that's a comfort to him. He *was* a much bigger man than I am, too, though not so big as you. See how loosely his things fit me." As he spoke he passed his hand slowly over his grossly unshaven chin.

Mr. Sprott had listened to this—on Dartmoor—disquieting statement with a face which had rapidly exhibited a number of marked changes. By the end of it his jaw had fallen so as almost to conceal his second chin, and his cheeks were mottled red and white by the struggle of his emotions.

"You took——" he gasped at length. "He *was* bigger——"

The man in yellow laughed a laugh most ghastly to hear.

"Yes," he said; "but a good big stone

in skilful and determined hands is a great leveller. Ha, ha! It levelled him all right, poor ass. But he should really have known better. He hadn't even your excuse, for the suit I was wearing when we met was —well, it was unmistakable. Ever been in the gaol, sir?" He jerked his thumb in the

you eat? Surely that sandwich has been awaiting your attentions too long."

Mr. Sprott had been very busy thinking—very busy indeed.

"Why do you tell me these things?" he now burst out. "Miserable man, how can you sit there, talking so lightly, and the



"The young man in yellow tweeds grew suddenly very red in the face. 'You greedy bounder!' he exclaimed passionately. 'For twopence I'd——'"

direction of Princetown penitentiary. "No? Ah, you ought to have had a look at it, because you may not have another chance. We're here to-day and gone to-morrow, and life is an uncertain business at the best of it. Yes, it's great up there. Fine healthy existence. Everyone has a good appetite in the gaol. And, talking of appetite, why don't

blood of a fellow-creature not yet dry on your hands! Fly, rather! Make your way from this neighbourhood with all speed. You have nothing to fear from me. Heaven knows, I am not the man to betray a fellow-creature, no matter of what crimes he may be guilty. Fly, I say. This is the Moreton-hampstead Road. Take it. It will lead you

away from Princetown. That way! That way!" And he pointed energetically eastwards.

"Why do I tell you these things?" said the young man. "Well, because, as you say, I have nothing to fear from you. And I know that you will not betray me, because *I* will see to that, my very dear sir."

A pregnant silence followed this announcement — a silence that nothing but the fog-drops that fell from the bridge into the river did anything to enliven.

"Unfortunate creature," said Mr. Sprott at last, "it is not for me to condemn you. Heaven knows what evil companionship, what wrong environment or hereditary taint has brought one of so refined a speech to so dreadful a pass. My heart bleeds for you, my poor fellow! Have a sandwich. Have a packet."

He filled his hands with eatables and held them out to his sinister companion, who took them with a bow and at once began upon them.

"Come," he said indistinctly, after a moment or two, "this is more *like* hospitality. Is it brandy in that flask of yours, sir, or sherry?"

Mr. Sprott hastened to repair his omission, and the other drank his very good health. "Chicken!" he said. "How long is it since I tasted chicken, I wonder? It's not often on the menu up yonder. But eat away, my dear Warden. It's impossible for a man like myself to enjoy his victuals properly alone. You don't share that weakness, I know, but surely it isn't necessary to starve yourself because I'm eating. There's lunch for four here. A cracknel at least, Warden. I say that I wish to see you eat this cracknel. I say that I *intend* to."

Mr. Sprott snatched the proffered biscuit and endeavoured to masticate it, but his dry mouth made a poor job of its business.

"Water, dear sir," said the young man. "Nothing like water to help a cracknel on its way. This brandy's capital, but it's not a circumstance to water for a man with a cracknel to put down. I suggest the river, my good don. I say, I *suggest* the river."

Mr. Sprott rose feebly and moved down the bank to the edge of the stream, fell on his knees, and scooped water with his hand. Had he been bidden to get into the river up to his neck, he would have unquestioningly obeyed, so strongly had he come to be affected by the ferocious geniality of this terrible outlaw.

He raised his head and looked apprehensively towards the bridge, where the young man remained seated, with his back turned now to the river, and busy taking alternate bites at the chicken's wing and pulls at the brandy flask. And suddenly into the brain of Mr. Sprott crept an idea of infinite cleverness, and, with it, into his heart came hope.

With his eyes upon the man in yellow, he began to move down-stream very softly. The other never turned his head. Slowly, slowly the mist built up its grateful wall between them. Then suddenly Mr. Sprott bolted.

Behind him he heard a shout and then a laugh. And then all was still, save for the rapid brushing of his boots through the heather and the scurry of sheep, disturbed by his flight.

II.

HAVING run blindly, and not without falls, through the fog for several minutes, Mr. Sprott at last, from sheer exhaustion, was forced to halt. He stood very still, holding his labouring breath and listening with all his ears; but he could hear nothing. The silence of the Moor was complete.

He gasped a word of heartfelt thankfulness. Evidently pursuit, if there had been any, had been abandoned. Praise Heaven for the fog! And now what was he to do? How was he to get home? If he could find the Cherry Brook, it would lead him down to the West Dart, and the West Dart would lead him back to Two Bridges. But where was the Cherry Brook?

He pulled out his map and at once took heart. He had run westwards from the river. That meant that he was now in quite a small area, bounded by the two rivers and the road. He had only to go straight ahead in any direction but that from which he had come, and in a quarter of an hour or so he must find a trustworthy guide of some sort.

He set up his compass on a stone—Cecilia had insisted on his buying a compass before venturing into Dartmoor—studied it a moment, and then started on his journey southwards.

To be brief, he arrived at Two Bridges about three-quarters of an hour later. Entering the hotel and passing through the lounge, the first object that his eyes encountered was the peacefully slumbering form of the miscreant whom he had left by the bridge over the Cherry Brook. He wore now a suit of crumpled grey flannels, and his face was scrupulously shaved; but he

was unmistakable. Mr. Sprott's eyes nearly started out of his head, and he sprang aside with a stifled ejaculation, dodged behind a pillar, and paused to observe. Yes, there could be no faintest doubt of it—it was the man himself.

What incredible effrontery this fellow possessed! Here he lay, sound asleep, in the public lounge of "The Saracen's Head"—and Princetown Gaol not three miles away! Was it the recklessness of despair or—of calculation? Was it not, perhaps, a clever move? Who would think of looking for an escaped convict in the lounge of the hotel at Two Bridges? No one, surely.

But now there was only one line of action that any good citizen might take.

Mr. Sprott stole on tiptoe to the dining-room and called the head waiter, the general factotum of the establishment, aside.

"Waiter," he said, "you must telephone to Princetown at once and tell them that an escaped convict is in the lounge."

The waiter looked oddly at Mr. Sprott, but quickly decided that his words had been seriously meant. "Why, sir," he said, "there isn't any convict escaped, as far as I knows of. We always hear at once, and no word's come from the prison."

"I met him on the Moor an hour ago," said Mr. Sprott. "He is a desperate man; I was lucky to escape from him with my life. I insist on your communicating with the prison."

"Let's have a look at him first," said the waiter, and passed through the door.

Mr. Sprott followed, and pointed out the sleeping desperado.

"Lor, sir," said the waiter, "that ain't no convict! That's Mr. Bray, that is. He's often here. Lives other side of the Moor, and walks over here by Cranmere Pool often. Keeps a bag here, he does. He come in about a quarter of an hour ago, dead beat—been out all night on the Moor. Started yesterday morning, and lost his way in the mist, and then dropped his compass in a river, and there he was. Had a bit of luck, though, at the end, it seems. Met a very kind gentleman who give him all his lunch, and—— Why, perhaps——"

"That will do, waiter," Mr. Sprott interrupted. "You may go back to the dining-room."

The waiter, who was busy, did so without offering any further comment upon Mr. Sprott's mistake. That gentleman walked deliberately up to Mr. Bray and shook him by the shoulder. Mr. Bray opened his eyes sleepily and blinked up at Mr. Sprott; then recognition dawned on his face.

"By George," he murmured, "it's the don—the dear, good Warden! I brought your flask and fishing-gear along, Warden—your lunch, too. It's that that's made me so sleepy, I expect. Your stuff's all up in my bedroom; I'll have it taken to yours presently. I thought I'd probably find you here; there aren't so many hotels in this part of the world."

"Sir," said Mr. Sprott splendidly, "you shall hear more of this. You must learn that I am not to be trifled with. Your infamous lies have been exposed to me. Sir, if there is justice in England, you will regret your proceedings of an hour ago."

"Oh, my very dear Warden," cried Mr. Bray, "I do assure you that I shall never regret them! What! Regret so excellent a luncheon? Regret chicken and tongue, and pork pie, and four sorts of sandwiches, and five sorts of biscuits, and two sorts of cake, plum and Madeira? And strawberry jam? *And* that salt which Cecilia, admirable woman, never forgets? Regret comestibles so appetising, Warden? Never!"

"Atrocious young man," said Mr. Sprott through his teeth, "I refer not to those things, but to your theft of them."

"Come, come, Warden," Mr. Bray responded, "let us be careful what words we use in a public place. Theft is surely an over-description of my participation in your very excellent lunch. Remember that you invited me to your table. Let us say that, like the Eastern story-teller, I earned a meal with an amusing fairy tale; but never let it be suggested that a highly-educated Warden of an Oxford college could ever swallow such a story. Why, my very dear sir, had a convict been on the Moor, do you really fancy that you would have been allowed to go fishing unwarned? I admit that that touch about the looseness of my clothes was rather convincing, but the artist knows how to take advantage of every propitious circumstance. I always like my walking clothes too big for me, but I had never supposed that the fancy would help me to a meal.

"Again, how will you look in the witness-box when my counsel asks you why you didn't take me in your two hands and tie me up with my own necktie, and drive me before you, with my own stick, back to Two Bridges and durance vile? You have ten inches the better of me in height, and in weight at least six stone. Are you

prepared, then, to persuade the jury that you were too good a man to fight? And, if so, what becomes of your citizenship, public spirit, and several other virtues that the Warden of an Oxford college is supposed to possess? Lastly, my dear Warden, are you willing to go into the box and swear that out of a luncheon that was amply sufficient for a whole picnic you refused so much as a sandwich to an obviously starving man? Upon your reasons for doing so my counsel will no doubt cross-examine you thoroughly. It may appear that your care for the conventions of Society forbade you to eat with a person who had not been properly introduced to you, even though he tried to acquaint you with his identity, or it may simply come out that you are a glutton and a niggard. This much, however, is certain—you will not be able to exhibit yourself as a man particularly worthy to exert your influence over honest-hearted young Englishmen at a peculiarly impressionable time of their lives.

"So you see, my dear Warden," he concluded, with an elaborate yawn, "that I have got you absolutely on toast. And so good day to you. Tell your story to the police, if you please, but remember that I have mine also, and that, if you want me to tell it, you know just what to do."

Mr. Sprott opened his mouth two or three times slowly, like a fish on a bank. Then he turned suddenly and went upstairs to put Cecilia in the wrong as quickly as possible.

Mr. Bray picked up a weekly paper, then fourteen months old and just as good as new to a sleepy man.



THE WOODLAND WAY.

BY BIRKET FOSTER.

YOUNG SHEPHERD

By AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON

THE sky was bright upon the day
He went away,
And, when the sad news came, was still as gay.

The hill on which his steps have been
Is still as green,
And on the hillside the grey sheep are seen.

The brook that sang while he sat near
Is just as clear,
And sings its careless song as he were here.

There's new bloom on the valley flowers:
The country bowers
And singing hedges greet fresh summer hours.

So fair the tranquil earth and skies:
There's naught denies
The grace of God that lives on, though it dies.

Good folk, perceive—an' you be fit—
God-simple wit,
And know young shepherd still a part of it.

THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND ITS WORK

By S. L. BENSUSAN

PERHAPS the most difficult post in the Government is the Ministry of Food—a Ministry without tradition, standing equipment, or standardised procedure.

That the office is the most thankless of all Government posts requires little insistence. Men and women will endure a number of restrictions, face a multitude of troubles, obey endless orders just so long as their elementary liberty of action is not threatened. But when you tell them that they may not eat this without a ticket, or that in what they regard as sufficient quantities, and when everybody who cannot get the profit or the measure of food he hoped for attributes the trouble to one source, it is safe to say that you provide, in normal circumstances, for the creation of the most unpopular figure in the kingdom.

Perhaps because the times are so tragic, and still more because we are at heart a sporting nation, and are quick to understand when a man is "playing the game," the Food Minister is not disliked, though there is no reason to believe that he derives any satisfaction from the national toleration. There is a pretty general feeling that nobody would like his job, and that, in the long run, he will do it as well as anybody is likely to under the difficult conditions that exist, and must remain with us for a long time to come, for, be it remembered, food shortage will not terminate with war.

At the same time the Ministry of Food is regarded, very wrongly, as the source of food supply, whereas the office is in no way concerned with questions of production, but merely with handling produce in such a fashion that it shall in the end reach the consumer in sufficient quantity without any unnecessary price inflation on the way. The Board of Agriculture looks after production as far as it can, and this is not beyond our island boundaries.

The whole story of Food Control, from its inception down to the present time, is a fascinating narrative of colossal and, on the whole, successful endeavour. From small beginnings it has grown until its machinery may be said to cover the earth. The cornfields of America, Canada, Australia, and the Argentine are controlled with the friendly assistance of the authorities concerned. The dairies and sheep farms of Australia and New Zealand are working in part for us. The vast cattle ranches of Paraguay, the tea plantations of India and China, the Spice Islands, the cotton fields of Egypt, the sugar plantations of the West Indies, acknowledge the Ministry of Food. So, too, does every one of the seventy thousand little general shops scattered about these islands, the five thousand co-operative societies, the ten thousand multiple shops, and the fifteen thousand grocery stores. We eat our every meal under the invisible eye of the Food Controller, who knows, through the Board of Agriculture, what we are raising on our farms and allotments. If we do not thank him for what is plentiful, we can at least blame him for what is scarce. We feed our cattle, pigs, and poultry upon what the Ministry of Food has decided to allow us to buy, and we submit to restrictions and orders that are, more or less, as the sand upon the seashore for multitude, in the knowledge that it is all for the best, and that the mild dissatisfaction of both producer and consumer is a fair test of the truth that there is a proper equality of sacrifice. A certain selfishness is ingrained in all of us; it has been the mission of the Ministry of Food to reduce it to a minimum.

We started the vital business of food control at a critical time; not, perhaps, too late, but perilously near the danger point. There was a time when the stocks of wheat and flour in this country were only nine weeks from exhaustion point; there was a day when the country held less sugar than is consumed in a fortnight. Our own production, down to the autumn of last year, was not calculated to supply more than a third of our vital requirements. For the

rest we relied upon growers oversea. Russia has ceased to provide a market. Supplies from Holland, Denmark, and Scandinavia have dwindled alarmingly; they were bound to do so as a reflex action of our blockade of the Central Powers. In order strictly to limit their available supplies, we have had to ration neutral countries, and they have little to export. On the other hand, the vast needs of our armies in Salonica, Egypt, Palestine, and Mesopotamia, together with the requirements of France and Italy, have created a heavy drain upon our shipping and



A MEETING OF THE CONSUMERS' COUNCIL.

Photograph by Alfieri, reproduced, by permission, from "The Times History of the War."

our supplies, while the submarine menace has enforced an economy of shipping only to be realised by those handling the traffic. In all probability it is to the convoy system that we owe our ability to carry on while we take new, subtle, and deadly measures to add to the mortality of submarines.

The fifteen thousand miles that separate us from our cousins of Australia and New Zealand render their great supplies well-nigh unavailable. A merchantman can take several trans-Atlantic journeys in the time required to go to Australia and return; and we are relying for corn chiefly upon the United States and Canada, from whose ports ships in convoy can sail in comparative security, though at a certain sacrifice of speed, due to the fact that the pace is regulated by the speed of the slowest vessels. It has become necessary of late to eliminate everything but the essentials, the materials that supply the elemental needs of Army and civilians. The Ministry of Food has no control over shipping; it can but put its requirements before the authorities, indicate the location of the foodstuffs, and handle them when they reach our shores. This limitation is necessary. It would be quite easy to feed the nation to repletion point if there were no war and we could still get access to the markets. The balance of importance of shipments is an affair for the Cabinet, which must consider and adjust conflicting claims. Hence it follows that the Ministry of Food is face to face with a series of ever-changing conditions, and these in their incidence give rise to the stream of new orders and restrictions that we find so irksome, and yet know to be founded upon a hard bedrock of necessity. Happily we know that, as far as the essentials of our subsistence are concerned, the people of these islands share and share alike in

fashion unknown hitherto in our history, and this knowledge is of enormous importance in sustaining the morale of all classes. Any inequality of distribution, accepted in peace-time as a result of the harsh law of supply and demand, would be intolerable now, when we have endured the strain of nearly four years of war sacrifice, and would have led inevitably to industrial unrest that enemy agents—and they are still in our midst—would have encouraged as a priceless asset in the "defeatist" campaign. Equality of sacrifice at home may not be attainable, but the main endeavour of responsible authorities is to promote it by rendering money valueless as a purchasing medium for more than a fixed measure of rationed foods.

The way to the conditions now obtaining has been a long one and arduous. There have been difficulties, delays, mistakes, unexpected happenings of all kinds, but because the main principles underlying the system of control have been sound, the Ministry has surmounted the worst of its difficulties. In order to grasp the extent and variety of the work done, it is necessary to consider it in the three fundamental aspects—first, the actual supply of food; secondly, the control of prices; and, lastly, the distribution, which includes rationing. Needless, perhaps, to add that these problems are interdependent.

Taking them in their order, we find that supply has two main problems of its own. The first is the one of world shortage. Of all the countries at war, it seems probable that England alone has increased her acreage under cultivation. This has not been possible because we are less heavily engaged, but because in 1914 we had so vast an area, in relation to our total acreage, that was not being cultivated at all. All too long we had depended upon the foreigner. France, Belgium, Italy, Serbia, Rumania were closely cultivated; Russia's granary was enormous.

To-day in all these countries production has been very seriously reduced. To give but one instance. A friend of the writer, who was through the Ukraine in the summer of 1916, and again a year later, said lately that on his first visit you could see nothing but crops, while on the second visit he found mile upon mile gone to waste. We have to help to feed Italy, whose agriculturalists, or many of them, are in the fighting line, and France, so much of whose fertile territory was torn away from her in 1914. Add to this heavy responsibility the failure of the North American wheat harvest last year, which fell from about seven million to some three and a half million tons, and it will be seen that the problem of supplying the first essential article is a very grave one. There is wheat in the Argentine, and we have been getting some; there is wheat in Australia, and the moment one talks of this, it brings a reminder of the second part of the supply problem—the question of tonnage. This is one of the problems that we all know something about. We know that the United States require millions of tons of shipping in order to bring their troops and provisions to Europe, that we have to keep our armies supplied and reinforced in all quarters of the globe, that our Allies make certain heavy but inevitable demands upon us, and that the submarines have maintained their sinkings. We have laid the merchant service of the world under contribution; German and Austrian ships have been seized in harbours that have ceased to be neutral. New methods of loading and quicker methods of handling in dock have helped to make tonnage go farther than it did; but the total losses of the world's mercantile marine, at a time when the demands upon it are without precedent, run into many millions of tons. If there were plenty of tonnage, Australia's wheat would make up for America's shortage; the cattle of the Argentine would fill our shops; the horses of Paraguay and Uruguay would be helping on the land; we could fatten our cattle upon the cotton cake of Egypt and linseed cake of India, and feed the babies on the synthetic milk from the soya bean of Manchuria. But the Ministry of Food has had a constantly dwindling force of merchantmen to fetch and carry. It is particularly unfortunate that the greatest shortage should have occurred in the country most accessible, but difficulties exist to be overcome, and there are times for action rather than complaint. Perhaps the moment will come when the number of destroyers available will enable us to extend to all waters the system of convoy with which hitherto no enemy submarine has been able to contend effectively; perhaps, as labour gets deeper into its stride in the Old World and the New, the output of merchant tonnage will overtake the losses. In the meantime the Ministry of Food must take what ships it can get, and keep the nation fed as best it can, always remembering that the unexpected is bound to happen in war-time.

The second fundamental aspect of the Ministry's work is the control of prices, a piece of work that has been fiercely criticised, though it needs no gift of vision to see that

it was inevitable. In times of peace a commodity is worth what it will fetch in open market. Nobody can ask more, nobody need take less. In war-time it is of the first importance to control gambling in the necessities of life. It is not for the good of the nation that any section of it should become extravagantly rich at the cost of the general public, nor is it to be forgotten that war does not magnify respect for the faults or shortcomings of any social order. Inasmuch as war limits supplies, the control of prices becomes a necessity, in order that all who make up the nation may get fair treatment and be sustained and strengthened in the determination to do their best. Had prices not been controlled, many of the commodities that nobody cares to do without would have been driven up to prices beyond the reach of all but the rich. Already, when Lord Rhondda took office in June, 1917, there were outcries, some of them very wild and bitter, against the existing policy of letting well alone. It was abundantly necessary to take the matter in hand, not merely on account of agitation that was in part genuine, in part pacifist, in part of enemy origin, and in every part dangerous, but because the elemental justice of control was obvious. So, at great trouble, the costs of wholesalers and retailers were examined; the latter class was registered, and the profits of both were limited. In spite of the steadily increasing cost of freight and occasional increase in rates of insurance (some seas are safer and others more dangerous than they were), there has been an average reduction of eight to ten per cent. in the price of necessities and five per cent. in the price of general commodities, and there has been no artificial shortage of supply.

The third and final division of the work of the Ministry of Food comes under the headings of distribution and rationing. This last branch of the undertaking was no less onerous than the others, for rationing has a remarkable effect upon distribution. The point requires no labouring. Take the case of a congested industrial area requiring very large supplies. It is able to attract them from other parts of the country by offering a slightly higher price. As soon as prices are controlled, and may not be varied to suit local needs, it pays the producer to sell as near as possible to production point, and where quantities are limited and local consumption can account for them, there can be no inclination to send to distant centres of demand.

To add to the initial difficulties of the Ministry, there were no reliable statistics of population. War reacts upon civil life in a number of ways. Men leave town and country for the fighting services; other men, with their wives and families, may go either to well-established industrial centres in search of work, or to small country districts that some accident of the distribution of factories has rendered populous. Unless statistics relating to these changes are immediately available—and they were not—the difficulties of regulating the supply of commodities are well-nigh baffling. It was impossible to overcome them without a measure of hardship and delay. Now the worst difficulties have been countered, and within the measure of the supplies available everybody gets a fair share, while home production, of whatever kind, has received an enormous stimulus from the grant of larger rations to those who produce what they consume. We could, without much difficulty, multiply very many times the supply of chickens, ducks, and tame rabbits that the country holds, and as every garden ought to be nine-tenths vegetable garden to-day, and it is easy to grow a large part of the food needed by live-stock, the increased ration to producers should not only result in greatly increased supplies, but may be expected to eliminate the last traces of household waste.

Now that the general principles of Food Control have been set out, and the main lines of action have been explained, it is possible to turn, in broad outline, to the actions that have resulted in the purchase, control, and distribution of foodstuffs for us and those who are with us. That the strong, definite actions required have been taken, and have proved effective, is in no small measure due to the large-hearted and generous co-operation of the United States of America, but for whose boundless resources the position in this country and the allied European States would have been such as nobody but our enemies would care to contemplate. It is by reference to the work of the various organisations established or enlarged by the Ministry of Food that the measure of achievement can be gauged, that we can learn how much more there is to praise than to criticise, and, above all, how much there is to be thankful for.

Long before the Food Ministry was created—indeed, before war was a few weeks old—the Government had established a Cabinet Committee on Food Supplies. A Royal Commission on the Sugar Supply was appointed soon after, and was followed by

Board of Trade control over chilled and frozen meat required for the Army. It is said that recommendations for the storage of grain were made and were not adopted, and certainly, in the first year or even two years of the War, the question of serious food shortage resulting from enemy action was not regarded as of paramount importance. On taking office Mr. Lloyd George's Government decided to establish a Ministry of Food and appoint a Controller. World supplies were dwindling, the husbandmen of all belligerent countries had taken their place in the ranks, and the submarine was growing faster than the measures designed for its destruction. To add to the world's difficulties, the winter wheat harvest of 1916–17 was a partial failure.

When, in June 1917, Lord Rhondda succeeded to the uneasy office vacated by Lord Devonport, the position was growing steadily worse. The United States Food Administrator, Mr. Hoover, estimated the shortage of the harvest of the Allies in Europe alone at five hundred million bushels, the cattle shortage at thirty-three million head. The home production of sugar in France and Italy was down by 66 per cent. Our potato crop had been a comparative failure in 1916, but, thanks to a subsidy, was on the road to achieve a record of two million tons excess.

Now, what were the main steps taken to organise and control the visible food supplies? The *trinoda necessitas* of action was that it should be sane, immediate, and world-wide. In the first place an Inter-Ally Council on War Purchase and Finance was established to meet the requirements of England, France, and Italy. It is actually operative in New York, for sixty-five per cent. of our supplies come from the North American continent. In London the Wheat Executive, the Sugar Commission, the Meat and Fats Executive, and the Oil and Seed Executive, were appointed in turn to consider the monthly needs of the Allies, the supplies available, and the just distribution *pro rata* of what is to hand.

To-day an Allied Provisions Export Commission, sitting in New York with British, French, and American representatives, supervised in friendly fashion by the United States Food Administration, buys all foodstuffs with the exception of wheat and sugar. Prices "fair and just" are fixed by an American Committee, and there are great branch committees looking after special departments and dealing with the packing-houses of the Middle West and other great American industries in the world of food production. Questions of finance and tonnage are settled by what is known as the American Board, which sits in London, has for chairman Mr. Austen Chamberlain, and includes representatives of the Foreign Office, the Treasury, and the Ministry of Shipping. Here come the rival claimants, and their claims are adjusted as far as it proves possible to adjust them. But if the Ministry of Food has one set of requirements, the War Office another, and the Munitions Ministry a third, it may prove beyond the capacity of the "American Board" to settle the differences, and in that case an appeal for direction lies to the War Cabinet, which gives a final decision. Points once settled, requirements are submitted in their order to the Inter-Ally Council, presided over by Mr. Oscar T. Crosby, of the United States Treasury. This Council instructs the various Food Executives, and the business goes through.

This brief and crowded description in outline of a big and elaborate procedure may tempt the reader to ask whether so much machinery is really required. The answer is that without the machinery the work could not have been carried out, or, at least, must have had diminished speed and effectiveness. It would have been impossible for Great Britain, France, and Italy to buy in open market without putting the price up one against the other, without a resultant inequality following upon the power of the purse, and without consequent discontent, suffering and ill feeling. The present method has eliminated competition, settled prices enforced by an American Government Committee, secured equality of distribution, and saved all friction. As a result of the work in America, our grain reserves in the autumn of 1917 were three million quarters higher in wheat alone than they were in the corresponding period of 1916, while the stores of canned meat have proved sufficient for the demand upon them.

A serious shortage in the supplies of fat has resulted from the reduction of the trade with Holland. It was necessary that we should make our own margarine, and to this end the whole exportable surplus of ground nut and palm kernel from West Africa, the whole of the Egyptian cotton-seed crop, and no inconsiderable portion of the linseed crops of South America and India have been laid under contribution. By the time these lines are printed it is hoped that English

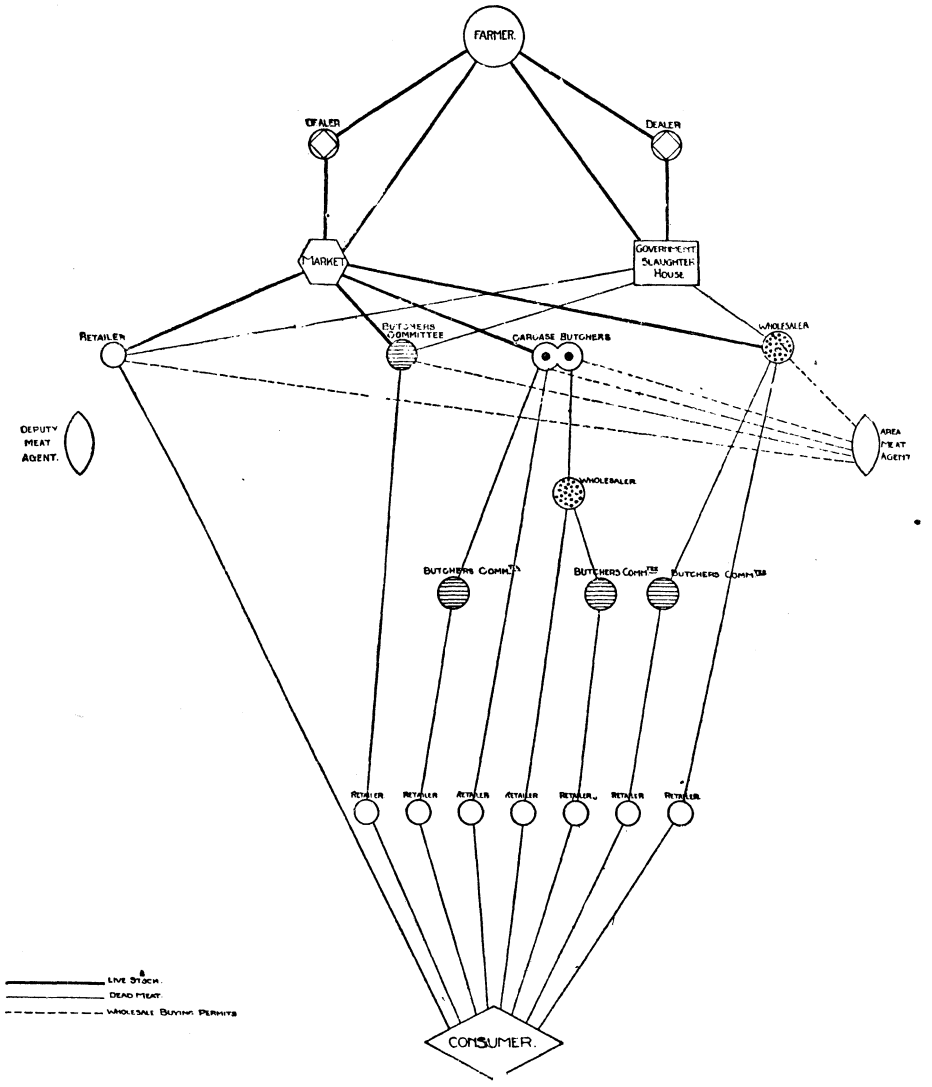
factories will be turning out one thousand tons of margarine a day on the seven-day-a-week basis, nearly an ounce a day per head of the population of these islands on a rough-and-ready estimate, and consequently nearly double the allowance when fats were first rationed.

The serious shortage of concentrated feeding stuff for the farm continues, and is likely to remain for some time to come, for the great part of the wheat offals that provided bran and sharps has now gone into the loaf, together with diluents, up to fifty per cent., in the form of maize, barley, rice, and potato; but the Ministry of Food has given precedence to dairy cattle in order that the milk supply may be maintained. If the authorities had their will, they would probably be glad to check butter making, which is, of course, the most extravagent method of using cream, and to substitute cheese making instead.

This is no more than another outline of work that could not be set down in adequate detail within any reasonable limits of space. It may at least suggest the means taken to secure supplies, and now we have to consider the means taken to conserve them, and to enforce economy upon people who are still only faintly aware of the truth that we are at war. To be, perhaps, more just, one should say they are not aware that their personal economy is a factor and, in a collective aspect, an important one in winning the War. It is clear that the attempt to regulate food consumption on voluntary lines was largely a failure. Thoughtful people were hardly affected by the appeals, because their common-sense and patriotism supplied the strongest incentive to strict moderation; but the majority of those to whom the exhortations were addressed did not respond or did not make sufficient response, and so rationing came into force, together with a very unsatisfactory Hoarding Order. A few additional sentences that would have made the position clear were left out, and while it was stated that it was an offence to acquire stocks after April 9, 1917, it was left to magistrates to decide how far stocks accumulated before the Order were liable to seizure, and whether people holding such stocks were permitted to buy from hand to mouth. There is, of course, no defence for the man who hoarded to get the better of his fellow-citizens, but it has been forgotten that, prior to the establishment of the Ministry of Food, there was no check upon profiteering, and people of small means and dwindling prospects were undoubtedly led to accumulate some articles of food before the profiteer had driven them up out of reach. If the Ministry of Food had done nothing more than check speculation in foodstuffs, it would have deserved well of the country. It is said that Mr. Kennedy Jones, as Director of Food Economy, helped to bring about a 20 per cent. reduction in the consumption of flour between March and July, 1917—a considerable achievement.

To-day, in the interests of distribution and economy, Great Britain has been divided into sixteen Food Divisions. In each of these the Borough and the Urban or Rural District Council appoint Local Food Committees, which must give representation to Labour, women, and the Co-operators. There are now some thousands of these committees. For cattle distribution the Ministry has established nineteen live-stock areas, employing officially the two or three thousand live-stock auctioneers in the country. There are Feeding Stuffs Committees in five chief ports, and Provincial Committees in every county to tackle the vexed question of cattle food distribution. Food Committees have power to commandeer the milk supplies in their area, and to supply what may be needed to mothers and children. Cold storage has been extended, transport organised on lines directed towards efficiency and economy, all waste, as far as it is preventible, is prevented, and a Council of Consumers advises the Ministry of its special needs and disabilities. A Costings Department conducted by accountants throughout the country checks the multiplication of profits in the necessities of everyday life, and the penalties for exceeding fixed prices are very heavy indeed. It must not be forgotten that the enormous rise in wages throughout the country, coupled with the reduction in supplies, has tended to reduce the purchasing power of money, and yet, notwithstanding this, the price of vital commodities tends to go down rather than up.

It will be seen from what has been set down here that the Ministry of Food, which will not celebrate its second birthday until the end of the year, has taken all the world outside these islands to be its province, and every man, woman, and child in these islands to some extent, large or small, under its surveillance. That it found chaos and has produced order out of it cannot be denied, while, considering the multiplicity of the interests with which it was compelled to interfere, there has been singularly little



friction. Some industries have suffered. Orders and regulations have not been uniformly successful, but the matter for surprise is that mistakes have been so few and so trivial, and that well within a year and a half of the creation of an entirely new Ministry it has got into its stride and is showing undeniable ability to handle each set of new problems as it comes along.

The road to useful achievement has never been easy. Every interest with a grievance has been vigorous and alert, the whole theory of food control is foreign to us, representing something we resent as an intrusion upon our proper privacy. For very many Lord Rhondda's procedure has had too much of socialism in it, for a few it has not yet been socialistic enough; but if many have been content to contribute to the Food Controller's task nothing better than a grunt or an evasion, the great majority has recognised both the necessity and the justice of Food Control, and has helped loyally enough.

This is as it should be, for we have in all probability many years of control before us. Peace cannot bring plenty. Neglected land must be coaxed back to fertility, the husbandman must return to his fields, the wastage of war must be made good over seas that have engulphed so many a gallant merchantman. And while all these beneficent changes are taking place, and the conscience of mankind is learning to envisage war as the thing it is, we must still stand in need of wise direction and restrained control.

A PARROT CRY

By FRED M. WHITE

Illustrated by W. R. Stott

AS Manning fell headlong into the room, full of one single, determined purpose, he was conscious of the amazing contrast between the conditions inside and out. He was half aware of what he saw, like one who dreams uneasily and illogically. For there, all was peace and refinement and the little odds and ends of luxury that go to make up the thing we call home.

To begin with, Edith Carson was sitting at the piano, playing some soft, elusive music to herself. There was just the suggestion of a smile on her face. The light from the subdued lamps reflected on the white blur of her dress and the diamonds in her dusky hair. Then she caught sight of Manning, and her expression changed to a sort of haughty amazement.

"Mr. Manning," she said, "what does this mean?"

Manning strode across the room and laid a heavy hand upon the girl's shoulder.

"Come along!" he said. "There is not a moment to be lost! Come without a word!"

Edith Carson rose to her feet.

"Really!" she protested. "Really!"

"Oh, there's not time for anything of that sort," Manning said bitterly. "I am not welcome, I know, but that's not the point. I will explain as we go along."

"You'll explain now," the girl said coldly.

"Very well, then," Manning said between his teeth. "Those blackguards have risen at last. There's not a man on the estate who is loyal to Adair. I told you what they were—I warned you not to come here, in the disturbed state of the country. This isn't Europe; it's a little pocket-handkerchief State in No Man's Land. You ought to have stayed in the town. And now, to put it mildly, your life is in danger."

Still the girl failed to comprehend. She elevated her eyebrows daintily and scornfully. "I stay here till the Adairs come back," she said.

Manning lost no time in further argument. He slipped his arm round the girl's waist and fairly lifted her off her feet as he carried her on to the balcony. Then he switched off the electric lights.

"Look," he said, "and listen!"

It was all soft, velvety darkness outside, a tranquil summer night, fair as the stars powdering the sky overhead. But here and there lights glowed against the sky, and ever and again flashes of flame stabbed the darkness. And then there came in quick succession the sound of shots.

"There are over five hundred of the devils there," Manning said hoarsely, "looting and burning—yes, and murdering! They call it a strike. And they are coming here! Now you are beginning to understand?"

Edith Carson drew a deep breath. It was coming home to her now, right enough. But even then, in that moment of peril, she was conscious of the feeling of resentment in her heart against the man by her side. For he had warned her of this—warned her of the danger of coming so far from the town at a time of labour unrest—and he had been right. He had always been right in his simple, dogged way, even from the moment, two years ago, when he had asked her to marry him, and she had laughed him to scorn. And now here they were, side by side, face to face with a terror all the more alarming because neither of them knew in what form it had come.

"Where are the Adairs?" Edith asked.

"In Adigo by this time," Manning said. "I managed to warn them, as they came along in the car, and they turned back. They could do nothing by coming on, and I promised to look after you. Even

then we had to fight for it. But the car is outside, and I am waiting. If you have the slightest regard for your safety, come with me at once."

Still the girl sat there hesitating.

"Where is Señor del Sartes?" she asked. "He would be able to stop all this, I am sure."

Manning smiled grimly under cover of the darkness. It was not for him to say just then that del Sartes lay out there in the garden with a bullet through that black heart of his, and that the hand that fired the shot was still half clasped about the waist of her who asked the question.

"I cannot tell you," Manning said simply, "except that he is dead. But I can tell you this—Miguel del Sartes was no friend of yours. Oh, I know what you think. You think I was jealous of him, and perhaps I was. And I know that he had fascinated you with those beautiful manners of his, to say nothing of his handsome face. If he had been here half an hour before me, we should never have met again!"

"Señor del Sartes was a gentleman," Edith said.

"He wasn't," Manning said doggedly. "He was a black-hearted scoundrel. I couldn't tell you this before, because I was not sure, and I don't think you would have believed me, anyway. But this I can tell you—he had a wife up there in the mountains, in that lonely hacienda of his, a poor creature who had lost her reason because of his treatment of her. And now do you begin to understand? Now perhaps you will believe me when I tell you that this uprising was engineered by him—well, because he has a wife, and because he had dared to raise his eyes to you."

No words came from Edith Carson's lips, though she tried to smile, but she knew very well, deep down in her heart, that this was a true thing. And she knew that Manning had come all this way, taking his life in his hands, for her sake. Another shot or two rang out, and somewhere in the garden the two standing on the balcony could hear the patter of stealthy feet. Manning waited for no more. He lifted the girl in his arms and staggered out into the night. He blundered down the path through the garden, and out into the road, where the car was waiting. He placed his burden inside and started the engine, after which he switched on the light. Then for a quarter of an hour or more the little car raced down the mountain road unmolested, save that every now and then a little flash of light from a rifle struck into the darkness. But they were through at length, and presently the car pulled up by the side of a deep ravine.

"We are fairly safe now," Manning said—"at least, we shall be till morning; and, after that, it largely depends upon your coolness and courage. We can't go back—any attempt to reach Adigo would be madness. The whole country will be in a state of chaos for days, and any Englishman or woman caught by those madmen would—well, you ought to know by this time."

They sat there, talking more or less fitfully, till the night began to fade, and then suddenly the sun shot up over the mountain peaks in a blaze of golden glory. It was wonderfully still and quiet there, with the snow-capped mountains behind them, and the deep river, cutting its way through the rocky gorge, lay at their feet. It was only a narrow gorge, not more than sixty or seventy feet at the outside, and the stream ran between with a steep precipice on either side. On the further bank the virgin forest began, a glorious tangle of tree and undergrowth, stretching back for a mile or two till the plains were reached, and it was for these plains that Manning was making.

"Perhaps I had better tell you what I am trying to do," he said. "We can't go back, because that is impossible. We should never get through to Adigo. And if we cross the river, we may reach that little station where Addison and his assistants have established themselves. You have met Addison?"

Edith nodded. She had met the distinguished naturalist more than once at the Adairs' hacienda, and, indeed, she rather liked the somewhat eccentric individual who had come all those miles from home in the interests of science.

"We shall be all right there," Manning said, "if we can only reach the place. There are half a dozen good men with Addison, and I know they have got at least one machine-gun there. But we haven't done with the danger yet. We have got to get through two miles of virgin forest, unless we go down the river's bank on the far side, and that might take at least a week. I have crossed that belt of forest only once before, and, if I lose my way, we can just sit down and starve."

"Oh, I am ready, if you are," Edith said. "And I am truly sorry, Tom. I have



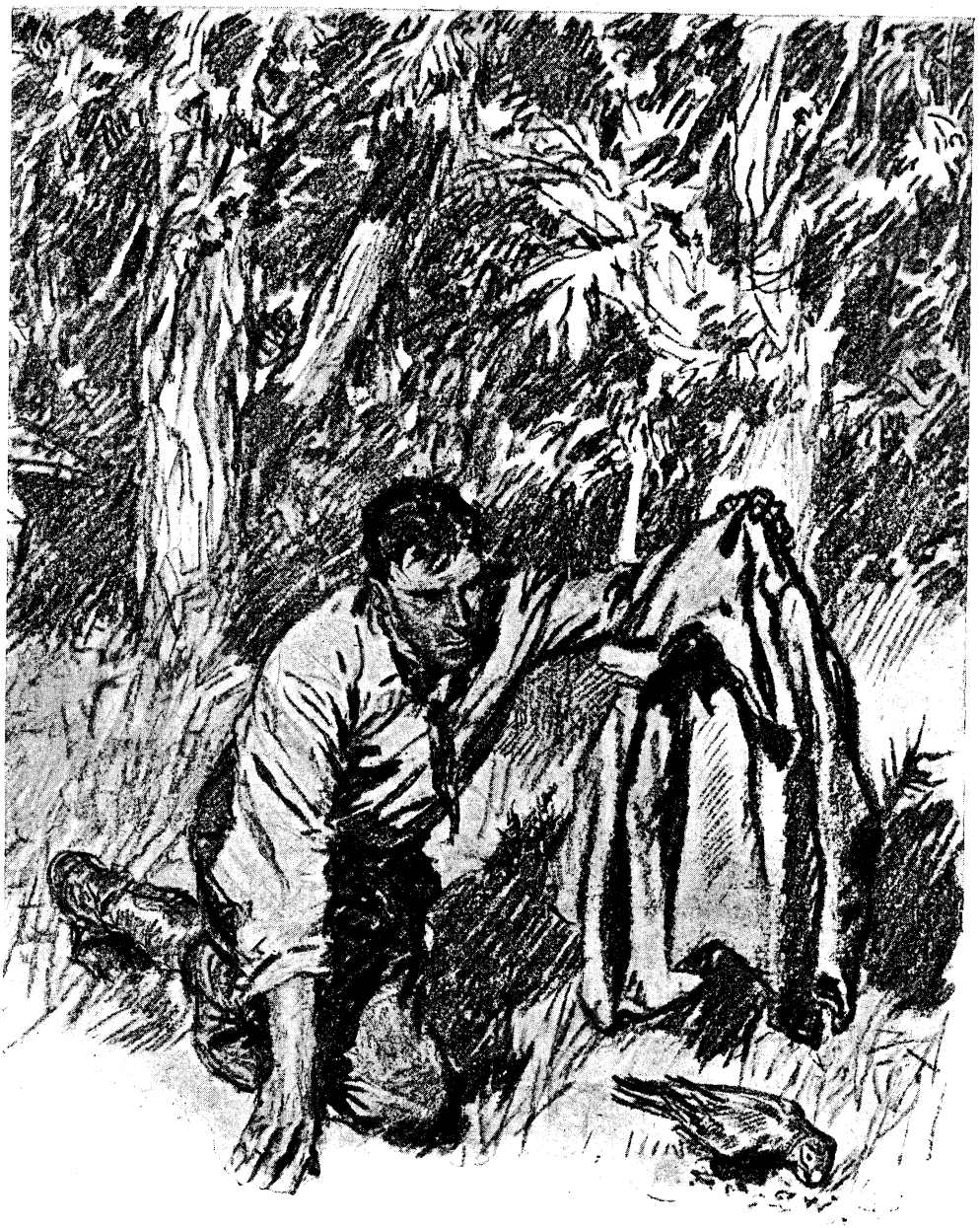
"Manning dropped on his hands and knees, and crawled cautiously forward . . . Then he took his coat

behaved very badly to you, and I want to tell you so. I suppose I was angry because you were right."

"Oh, we can go into all that presently," Manning said almost roughly. "We have got something else to think about now besides apologies. Those people are sure to follow us, even if it is only for the sake of getting hold of the car. What we have got to do now is to get across the river and cut off our retreat."

Across that rocky gorge, from one side to the other, with the river running two hundred feet below, was a slender steel rope, a kind of endless band running over wheels at either end. Suspended by this was a sort of basket arrangement by means of which the natives of those parts crossed the ravine. Edith looked at it and shuddered. She was plucky enough, as a rule, but the idea of crossing in that basket filled her with dismay.

"Is that the only way?" she faltered.



from his back and, reaching forward, dropped it quietly over the shining mass of grey feathers."

"Absolutely," Manning said. "It's quite safe. Now, I am going to put you in the basket, and I shall stand over you with my feet on either side. Now, then, screw your courage up. Think what would happen if any of those people were following us, and it's any money some of them are doing so. I think I had better blindfold you."

"No, no!" Edith cried. "That would be horrible. How brave you are, Tom!"

Manning grunted. He was in no smiling mood. He loved the girl by his side, but he could not altogether smother a certain resentment against her because she had quite wilfully placed herself in this position. He lifted her without ceremony in his arms and dumped her down in the bottom of the basket. He stood with his feet on either side, swaying perilously, and then began to work the steel rope over the wheel. It was a long and arduous task with the double weight, and Manning's muscles felt as if

they were on fire by the time he had reached the other side and placed the girl safely on the cliff.

"You just sit there," he said, "and wait till I come back. Oh, yes, I must go. You are all right here. You see, I have got my rifle and cartridges to fetch, and I managed to get hold of a certain amount of food last night, which is in the car. I planned all this out as I came along. I knew, if I got to the hacienda before del Sartes, that we should have a good sporting chance. And, thank Heaven, I was not too late!"

Manning came back presently with the basket loaded to the top, and then slowly and patiently proceeded to saw through the steel hawser with a file. It was tedious work, but presently the last strand snapped, and the wire rope disappeared in the bed of the river. With the snapping of the last strand something seemed to give way in Manning, too, for he wiped the heavy drops from his hot face, and for the first time since they started his features relaxed into a smile.

"I think we are all right now," he said. "The wretches can't follow us—at least, not for a day or two, anyhow, and by that time we ought to reach our friends."

"A day or two!" Edith exclaimed. "I thought it was only two or three miles. Surely we shan't be all that time getting through the forest?"

"Well, we may or we may not," Manning said cheerfully. "If we take the wrong turning, it may be a week."

He spoke easily enough, and with a certain indifference that he was far from feeling. He knew only too well, sportsman and wanderer as he was, what it meant to get off the track even in four or five square miles of that dense forest. He had heard of natives, men accustomed to the woodland life, who had lain down there and died of starvation within half a mile of their own huts. It was the time of the year, too, when the vegetation grew with almost savage luxuriance, so that Manning could see almost at a first glance how all trace of track and path had disappeared. They were only a mile or two from safety, but then he had heard and seen enough of that wild country on the other side of the ravine to know the danger in which they stood.

But of this he said nothing. There would be time enough for that when the dread catastrophe stared them in the face. He had no guide or compass, nothing but his own instinct and the memory of one journey through that dense forest. Here and there was a patch of clear ground, and in one of these they camped presently and partook of a meal. It was late in the afternoon before Manning made his first attempt at progress, only to find himself driven back presently on to the clearing, with a cold sensation at his heart and the knowledge that he and his companion were in deadly peril. For there was no sign of a track to be seen anywhere, and though there were openings here and there, they were breast-high in a sea of grass and luxuriant foliage. To go back was impossible, to go forward something like madness. And as the day went on and night came, followed by another dawn, Edith Carson began to see that Manning was keeping something from her. Up to now she had undergone no hardship particularly, for the nights were mild enough, and her thin evening dress, together with Manning's coat, had been sufficient to protect her.

She turned to him suddenly.

"You are afraid?" she challenged.

"Not for myself," Manning replied. "At a pinch I could do the few miles down-stream and swim the ravine. I have matches and some cartridges, and I am used to this sort of life, as you know. But—yes, I might just as well tell you, we're in terrible danger, and I am to blame."

"You are not!" the girl cried. "We may be in terrible danger, but nothing like the peril I should have had to face if you had not come to my assistance."

"I am glad you understand that," Manning said curtly.

"Oh, I do! Del Sartes stirred up that strike. There would have been no trouble but for him. And he did it because—because—oh, I cannot say it!"

"Because he wanted to get hold of you," Manning interrupted. "His idea was that no one on the estate should survive last night's work. And if I had not heard of this and hastened to the spot, he would have succeeded. At any rate, he has paid the price. I saw to that."

"You killed him?" Edith cried.

"I shot him, certainly. On my side, at any rate, it was a fair fight. But what does it matter? Why go into all that? It is the future we have to think of."

Edith Carson bent her head in shame. She remembered now the warnings that Manning had given her, and how she had flouted them. The spoilt child of a rich American father, she had travelled the

world as she pleased, making friends here and there, and living her own self-centred life until Manning had drifted across her horizon. Perhaps, if his admiration had been a little less manifest, if he had not wooed her quite so humbly, she might have given him her heart long ago. And because he had followed her half across the world, it had been her mood to treat him with a certain good-humoured contempt. But that was not her feeling now.

She turned to him suddenly, with a look in her eyes that a little while before would have filled him with gladness.

"I am responsible for all this," she said. "How foolish I have been, how blind! And yet I meant nothing. Now tell me the truth—tell me, are we standing here face to face with death? I am not without courage, Tom. I shall dread things a lot less if I really know."

"Well, then, we are," Manning said. "We can't go back, and I don't know the way forward. It's only a mile or two, if I knew the right direction, but it might be a continent as far as we are concerned. And I am afraid to leave this clearing. There are all sorts of dangers round us—snakes and wild beasts, and all that kind of thing. We have enough food for a few days, with care, and I have my gun. Good Heavens, how helpless a man is at times like this!"

They made more than one attempt to find an avenue of safety down those tangled green lanes, but each evening, before dusk fell, they were forced back again into the opening, where they sat, sharing the rapidly-decreasing stock of provisions, augmented from time to time by Manning with his gun. They kept up a good fire, there in the heart of the forest; and long after Edith had fallen asleep, to dream fitful dreams, Manning sat moodily looking into the gloom beyond the ring of the firelight, and catching the amber glow in more than one pair of restless, savage eyes. And so it went on, until there was barely enough food left for another day or so, and Manning was down to his last handful of cartridges. His clothes hung about him in rags, his face was grimy, and his chin black with a four days' growth of beard. And, in sooth, Edith Carson was in little better case. Manning had saved her as much as possible, but that filmy evening dress of hers was all in shreds, the diamonds—which she still wore in her dusky hair—looked grotesquely out of place. And so the fourth evening came, with Edith sleeping a few yards away, and Manning hunched up by the side of the fire, his empty pipe in his mouth and a look on his face that was not good to see. He was tired and worn out, and very near the breaking-point with fatigue and anxiety. Presently he began to nod, and was drifting off subconsciously into the realm of dreams, when a voice struck on his ear.

It was a strange, hoarse voice, hardly human, a croaking, mocking sort of voice from somewhere overhead, so that Manning opened his eyes with a sudden feeling that he was either dreaming or that he was on the verge of madness. He took a pull at himself and wiped the cold moisture from his forehead.

"I am going dotty!" he murmured. "I mustn't do that—I mustn't do that!"

Then the voice came again, clearly enough this time, and Manning knew beyond question that he was listening to it, cold and trembling, but with all his senses about him.

"Have a drink! Have a drink!" the voice said from somewhere overhead. "Have a whisky and soda!"

Manning laughed. A queer, hysterical feeling gripped him by the throat. Edith Carson sat up suddenly.

"Did you hear that?" she whispered. "Was it real?"

"It must be real if we both heard it," Manning said.

"I heard it last night," Edith went on. "Just the same words, only I thought I was dreaming, and didn't like to say anything about it."

The voice came no more, and daylight failed to afford any trace of a human footstep. And then, next day, towards evening, just as it was getting dark, the mysterious voice was heard once more in the dense mass of foliage overhead. At the repetition of the familiar suggestion Manning broke into a peal of unsteady laughter. He pointed upwards.

"Do you know what it is?" he asked. "It's a parrot—a parrot evidently escaped from somewhere close by, and beyond question belonging to some Englishman. Now, I wonder if that bird belongs to Addison? He's got any amount of birds there—in fact, birds are his particular hobby. He can do anything he likes with them. It's any money this parrot belongs to him."

"It must," Edith said. "But I don't see how this is going to help us."

Manning sat there furiously thinking.

He moved presently a little further into the open, then beckoned Edith to his side. Silently he pointed upwards. And there, on a branch a few feet above their heads, was a great grey parrot eyeing them with a sort of solemn friendliness, and a peculiar twinkle in that beady little black orb of his.

"Whisky and soda!" he said. "Come and have a whisky and soda! Help yourself, my boy!"

"If we could only get hold of him!" Edith whispered.

"Ah, if we only could!" Manning said, with a deep breath. "Look at him! There isn't a feather out of place. He's too sleek and well fed to have escaped of his own accord. He's one of Addison's pets, and is probably allowed to fly about the forest as he likes. If we can only get hold of him, we are saved."

"Are we?" Edith asked eagerly. "How?"

"Well, the rest would be easy. We could write a little note to Addison and tie it round the bird's claw, telling our friend exactly where we are, and the rest is easy. Addison knows every inch of this ground, and he could reach us without the slightest trouble. It's any odds that bird goes back home some time or other, once a day, to be fed, certainly. Here, Polly! Pretty bird!"

As the familiar tongue struck upon the bird's ear, he burst into a laugh and hopped down two or three branches till he was almost within grasp.

"Addison's bird for a million!" Manning cried. "That's his laugh to a note. Come along, Polly!"

But the parrot refused to come any closer. It was only when Manning produced a small portion of his precious food that the grey bird showed further signs of friendliness. It was maddening to have him just one yard out of reach, when the absolute salvation of two human lives lay, so to speak, across those glossy grey wings. Manning and his companion stood there silent and motionless and hardly breathing in the tension of the moment. Then the parrot fluttered to the ground, croaking and snapping his beak at the tempting food. Manning dropped on his hands and knees, and crawled cautiously forward, knowing that two lives depended upon the next moment. Then he took his coat from his back and, reaching forward, dropped it quietly over the shining mass of grey feathers. There was a little struggle, and a volley of oaths in the Spanish tongue, and then the bird was safe in Manning's grasp.

"Take my pocket-book out of my pocket," he said, with the sweat pouring down his face. "Just write a few lines to Addison, explaining where we are. It's our only chance."

The note was written, shakily enough, and then wound round one of the bird's claws and carefully tied with some strands of silk taken from Edith Carson's dress. After that Manning pitched the parrot into the air, and he sailed away high over the tree-tops, screaming and chattering vehemently at the treatment to which he had been subjected.

"I hope to Heaven he is going straight home," Manning said. "If so, we are saved, though I expect we shall have to wait till morning."

They sat round the fire now, talking freely enough, for their hearts were full of hope, and, moreover, before they settled down to sleep, they had come to a perfect understanding. The sun was climbing high before Manning opened his eyes, and when he did so he saw the kindly face of his naturalist friend looking down upon him from behind his gold-rimmed spectacles. There were other men besides the famous naturalist gazing eagerly at the strange scene before them.

"You can tell me all about it presently, old man," Addison said. "Meanwhile, come along and bring the lady with you, and get a bath and a change of clothing. You have had a close call, evidently. If it hadn't been for the parrot——"

"Whisky and soda! Whisky and soda!" croaked a voice overhead. "Help yourself!"

"Oh, I could do with one, Polly!" Manning laughed unsteadily. "You are a wise bird."

THE SILENT WITNESS

By A. M. BURRAGE

Illustrated by S. Abbey

THEY met quite by chance at lunch-time on the restaurant balcony. The girl, seated by herself at one of the round tables, was one of the last people whom Prosper Ferris expected to see. His face lighted up at once with surprise and pleasure, and if other emotions were at play beneath the surface they did not appear. He went over to her at once, and they shook hands, laughed, and chatted for a moment as people will who meet thus unexpectedly.

Janet Warland was a girl of twenty, who looked possibly a year or two older. She had a small, thoughtful face, comely enough in repose and almost beautiful when she smiled. Her features were small and delicate, her hair light brown, her complexion pale and only faintly tinged with colour. Under pensively arched brows her eyes, which were sometimes grey and sometimes hazel, looked out with a kind of rapt thoughtfulness. They were the eyes of a girl who desired to know the reason of things—one who wanted to delve beneath the surface, one who could not go through the world accepting so-called facts because other people thought they were facts. Yet she had a leavening of frivolity, and her eyes were now sparkling with a pleasure that was good to see.

"You may sit down and talk to me, if you like," she said. "I have only just ordered lunch. If you haven't an appointment here, you had better share the table with me."

Ferris pulled out a chair and sat down.

"Really, Miss Warland," he said, "this is rather wonderful. It's very seldom that I come here; in fact, I shouldn't be here now if a friend hadn't just postponed an appointment for lunch. And you—I thought you never came to London."

"I don't often," she answered, "and this is certainly the first time I have been here alone."

She seemed to hesitate, as if doubtful whether she should tell him more, and finally decided upon remaining silent. She sat still for a moment, watching him across the table, as if wondering what thoughts were lurking behind his eyes. They were blue eyes, with a certain hardness in them, but more than once she had known them to melt, and that generally when he looked at her. Often before she had tried to read the character written on the pale, bronzed face, the firm, strong mouth, the weak and narrow chin. Often she had tried to separate his strength from his weakness, both of which were so apparent.

"Well?" she said suddenly.

Ferris opened his eyes wider. "I beg your pardon," said he.

"I certainly think you ought to," Janet said. "What have you to say for yourself?"

He laughed uneasily. "You speak," he said, "as if you were bringing some charge against me. If you are, I must hear the charge before I answer it."

He paused to give an order to a waiter, and then turned to her again.

"The charge against the defendant," said Janet, "is that while staying at the Duchy Hotel, Looe, Cornwall, during the month of April, he met the prosecutrix and her aunt, also stopping at the same hotel, and having made friends with them and been very nice to them for the space of fourteen days, he did then basely desert them and disappear without saying good-bye."

There was a certain seriousness about her as she rattled off this parody of legal jargon, and her eyes remained fixed on his face all the time she spoke.

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"I left a note," he said.

"Oh, yes, and you were very polite! You expressed a hope that we should meet again, but you hadn't asked for our address, and you didn't leave your own. Obviously, for some reason, you didn't want to meet us again, but, of course, you couldn't say so. The charge against you is not of incivility, but of cold, clear, and calculating unkindness. Honestly, we were good friends, weren't we? What made you do it?"

"I think," he ventured, "that I said in my note that business——"

She laughed lightly on the word and cut short his speech. "Business!" said she. "Why, you'd only just been saying how thankful you were that business never troubled you! You could live where you liked, and work when you chose. After all, what has an author to do with business?"

"The defendant," said Ferris, "will reserve his defence. He is very sorry for his behaviour, which he knows must appear reprehensible."

Janet regarded him with a look of severity that was only half feigned. "Well," said she, "let us consider the case as remanded. Talk to me about something else."

He was visibly relieved and smiled broadly—exactly like a naughty boy who had managed to escape punishment, she thought.

"Good!" said he. "Let us talk about Miss Janet Warland—how, why, and when she came to town, and her adventures there. Are you really alone?"

She nodded. "I am only here for a day or so. I have come up to try and find my brother."

"Your brother? I didn't know you had one."

"Well, he's my half-brother; not the same name as mine. We can't get any news from him at home, and he's left the suite of rooms where he used to live. Mother's anxious about him. So I've said nothing, and just come to look for him. Now I'm here I don't quite know where to look."

"I'll help you," Ferris said. "I'm afraid you've found the task of searching like looking for a leaf in a forest."

"You see," she continued, "Cosmo's got a little money, and he isn't a—well, he isn't a quiet kind of boy, and that makes us all the more anxious."

He looked at her sharply, as if he had discerned a clue even in that brief description. "What's his surname?" he asked abruptly.

"Nunfield—Cosmo Nunfield. Why? Do you know him?"

The man's face was a study for the brief moment before he controlled it. It was calm again, however, almost before the girl could ask herself what she had seen in it.

"I've heard the name," he said in a carefully-controlled voice. "I know a man who knows him very well. I have often heard him speak of your brother. If anybody knows where he is, this man does."

"Then you could find out for me?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"To-night. I shall be seeing him to-night, but I can't lay hands on him before. Give me the telephone number of the place where you are staying, and I will ring you up."

"Will you? You're very kind, Mr. Ferris. I should be most awfully grateful if you would. Why, what's the matter?"

"Nothing! Why?"

"You were looking so strange. Have you heard—anything about Cosmo?"

"Nothing definite about him. Did I look strange? I was trying to make up my mind about something."

"And have you?"

"Yes. I was wondering if I dared ask you to come for a motor drive this afternoon. I'm going to ask it. Will you?"

Janet lowered her eyes and smiled.

"You know," she said, "you are still in disgrace, and I ought to say 'No.' But I have nothing in particular to do, and you will probably be able to let me have Cosmo's address to-night. Also I don't suppose I shall see you again until we meet accidentally, which may not be until we are nonagenarians."

"Good!" he said. "You're coming?"

"Yes. Don't pretend to be so pleased. It doesn't match with the deliberate way you've hidden yourself. And—I've another crow to pluck with you!"

II.

THE hired car took them out of London by way of Chelsea and Putney, through Richmond Park to Kingston, then along the Portsmouth Road and over the Hog's Back to Guildford.

It was a fine summer afternoon, with a hot sun overhead. There was little or no breeze, but the car's cleavage of the air cooled them, and on that perfect road only the least trail of dust followed the traffic.

At Guildford the car, at Ferris's command,

left the Portsmouth Road and took them under the wooded downs, past Newlands Corner, and into the village of Shere. Before entering the village they got out to see the Silent Pool, and lingered for a few moments by the clear, blue waters of that mysterious pond set in the shade of old trees.

They had talked little for some time, for in the rush of air between moving panoramas of Surrey hills and valleys they had had no more need for speech than the birds. But all the while Janet had been thinking deeply, and by covert glances had striven to read the thoughts of the man beside her.

What manner of man was he? Why had he deliberately run away from her at Looe, when certainly he had shown for two full weeks a strong liking for her society? She had given him no cause for offence, nor could he have felt a sudden aversion to her, since here he was, the same as ever, and obviously glad to be with her again.

She had read his stories and poems—had read and admired them long before meeting him. In fiction, except very occasionally, he dealt in pleasant realism. He wrote of pleasant people, who spoke and acted like the pleasant people she knew. It was seldom that he touched upon the seamy side of life. It was as if he held a hand over one eye, exclaiming: "I will not see the ugliness."

"Those carp down there must have a good time," he remarked, gazing at the lazy occupants of the pool. "Nobody to worry them, never a barbed hook hidden in their food. It doesn't seem fair, does it?"

"Why not?"

"Oh, there are other fish hatched in rivers—rivers from which they can't escape. And thousands of them are caught. Men come day after day and fish for them. Life's queer. Men and fish, we're all subject, after our kind, to different conditions. No two beings in the whole of creation get the same chances."

She looked at him swiftly.

"I've wondered about that," she said; "but one can think and think, and get no further, except to come to the conclusion that it isn't fair. Yet it must be fair. If one had no religion at all, one could not help seeing that it is one great, equitable law which keeps the stars in their courses and brings the seasons round in their turn. After all, life would be very dull if the smaller products of creation were so controlled. Those who start scratch in the race run a shorter course. Those who run on tired feet find a pleasanter rest after the race. It works out fairly in the end."

Ferris laughed gently, but there was a note of bitterness in the sound.

"That's a pleasant philosophy," he said. "The only thing wrong with it is that it isn't true. By the way," he added, as if wishing to change the subject, "do you know the legend about this pool? It's supposed to be haunted, of course. A poor girl drowned herself here to avoid the attentions of King John. I don't know the details. Anyhow, it was a long time ago, and it doesn't matter now."

Once again Janet looked up at him quickly and searchingly.

"Ah!" said she. "And is that *your* philosophy?"

"More or less. A hundred years hence it will all be the same. There *is* some comfort in that. I say, let's get rid of the car and walk into Gomshall. We'll tell the man to be outside 'The White Horse' at seven o'clock. That'll get us back to town by eight."

"Very well," Janet agreed; and they made their way slowly back to the road.

The way from Shere to Gomshall lies through a pleasant avenue of trees at the foot of the darkly-wooded downs. On the right hand the Tillingbourne winds its way busily through the fields. A lazy, old-world air broods over the valley, so that one might fancy oneself in a secluded corner of Devon, instead of an hour's drive from London.

As they set out to traverse the half-mile between the two villages, Janet suddenly attacked him,

"I told you," she said, "that I had another crow to pluck with you. I read a story of yours that disappointed me terribly."

"I am sorry," Ferris answered. "Which one was that?"

"It was called 'The Silent Witness.' Wait a moment, and I'll tell you what annoyed me. Your work, when you write of nice things and nice people, is always true. Of course, everybody has his faults, and, whereas you don't deny it, you don't generally show them. You show the bright side of the picture, and show it well. Now, in this story you write of a man who has been a thief, who reforms because he meets a good woman—the usual conception of a good woman—whom he loves. He becomes a new man. She returns his love, and they become engaged. So far, so good. But your man is morbid, and thinks: 'She doesn't love me, because she doesn't really know me.' There is no chance of his past

rising up to cause trouble, but every man is his own silent witness, for ever accusing him. In the end he tells the girl everything, so that she may know him for what he is, and so love or hate him. She changes utterly towards him, and sends him away, and he goes back to the old wretched life."

"Well?" said Ferris.

"Well, it was wretched and morbid, and it wasn't a bit true."

"What wasn't true?"

"About the girl. If she had loved him, she couldn't have given him up. A girl you have been placed in just those circumstances you cannot possibly know."

"But I do know."

He only smiled indulgently, and looked up thoughtfully towards the hills.

"Listen," she said. "I do know myself, and how I should feel in certain circumstances. When I was a child I had a doll of which I was very fond. Somebody trod on it and crushed it and broke all its limbs. It was a most unsightly object, but after that I loved it all the more. Women are like that."



"She sat still for a moment, watching him across the table."

loves a man for what he is, not for what he was or what he has done. She might—she must have been hurt, but she couldn't have given him up."

"How do you know?" Ferris asked slowly.

"Because"—she hesitated, and knew that she was flushing—"because, up to a point, the girl was very like me. And—and if I cared for a man, I couldn't——"

"How do you know?" he asked again. "Have you ever cared for a man, thinking him to be the soul of honour, and found him out to be a thief?"

"No; but——"

"There are no 'buts,' Miss Warland. Until

"Oh!" he answered. "Our lines of thought and action are so crooked and strange that there can be no parallels in real comparisons."

They had reached Gomshall now, and, turning to the right over the little bridge by the mill, made their way uphill until they came to a cottage smothered with rambler roses, and in the garden of which scores of rose trees were blooming.

"Let's try and get tea here," he suggested. "It's a charming spot. Sometimes I think I shall give it all up and take a little cottage like this and grow roses."

"Give all what up?" she asked quickly.

He only smiled.

III.

THEY had tea in the garden among the roses, in the shade of a thick hedge. The sun was dropping now, and the peace of evening was settling over the land. Great sunflowers were looking to the west, and their heads were drooping. They sat on after tea in silence, while Ferris smoked.

Suddenly, after a long silence, Janet spoke. "Why did you do it?" she asked.

"It's been a good day," he murmured, as if he had not heard.

"Why did you do it?" she asked again. "Why did you run away from us at Looe? I mean to know."

"Do you?" he said. "Then you shall. It was because I loved you."

The blood ran hot to her face.

"Yes, and because you were good, and because—forgive me!—you were beginning to care for me. And it wouldn't have done."

"I don't understand."

"And yet," he said, "you read that story and recognised yourself!"

"I don't understand," she repeated.

"Well, I'll tell you." His voice had grown suddenly hard. He sat very stiffly in his chair, and scarcely moved his lips when he spoke. "When I was a youngster I came to town with money. It was not a vast fortune, but, on the other hand, it was a great deal. At the 'Varsity I had developed a taste for cards and all other kinds of gambling, but I came down as innocent as a sheep. Well, sheep were meant to be shorn, and I fell into the hands of the shearers. In six months they had got hold of every penny of my money. I was plucked clean. I went home and made a clean breast of it to my father. He was furious and kicked me out. I returned to town no longer a sheep; I had learned things."

He paused and sighed wearily.

"You see," he said, "I didn't know you then. It might have been all so different. There was I, a victim, adrift on the world, with at that time one weapon only—sufficient knowledge to victimise others. So you see—— After a time I began to write for pleasure. I have never made my living out of it, but now I find it brings in quite a pleasant income. I have always lived as the shearers taught me to live. Of course, I used to hate myself, but I had learned the knack of setting my heel on to my conscience. I've done nothing for which the law could call me to account. I've simply taught fools to play games of skill, and taken their money by my superior knowledge. It's worse than ordinary stealing. The pick-pocket, the burglar, the confidence-trickster, they do take risks. I've broken the young and innocent on the same wheel as that on which I was broken. Then I met you. I wanted to give it up, but I thought: 'If she knew, she must hate me, and I should have to tell her.' All my yesterdays were accusing shadows. So I ran away."

"Prosper!"

He dared not look at her. It was the first time she had used his Christian name, and he winced at the break in the soft voice.

"That was what I meant when I said that I'd often wanted to give it all up and grow roses in just such a garden as this. I'm sick of it all—sick of this vendetta against the world. I can't strike at those who struck at me. But I haven't told you all."

He lit a cigarette with shaking fingers.

"Janet," he said, "you told me to-day about your half-brother. Heaven help me, I didn't know who he was! He never mentioned you. I could have taken you straight to him, but I didn't. I'd found you again, and I wanted one more afternoon with you. He's staying at my rooms—penniless. I was wondering what to do with him. Janet, he was one of my victims. I've got all his money, every penny! I must find some way of letting him have it back. Now——"

He rose up suddenly and looked at her. She sat quite still, her head sunk upon her breast. Thinking he could read something in her attitude, he shrugged his shoulders.

"Good-bye, Janet," he said, "and don't bother about me. I'll go up by train. You know where to find the car at seven o'clock. I'll ring your brother up, and tell him to go round to your hotel."

He lifted his hat, and had already turned to go, when she rose with a quick movement and called him back. He gazed at her with a startled look, as if he were dazzled by the glory in her eyes.

"Prosper, you mustn't go! Didn't I say that you were all wrong?"

She walked quickly to him, and, heedless of chance onlookers, he caught her in his arms. Half dazed, and fighting for belief, he strained against himself the woman and breathing thing who knew the worst of him and still loved him. The warm, parted lips strove yearningly against his. Then the little head fell a soft weight against his shoulder.

"Prosper, you mustn't leave *me!* I . . . want to stay with you always . . . and help you . . . grow roses!"

LETITIA AND THE DANCING LADY

By LAURENCE NORTH

Illustrated by Norah Schlegel

"OH, spiffing!" cried Letitia, at breakfast.

"What is spiffing?" asked her Aunt, rather apprehensively.

"This." And Miss Fortnum, radiant, handed over a letter. "It's from Mrs. Fyfield."

Miss Shackleton put on her pince-nez and read—

"The Master's Lodgings,
"St. Bartholomew's College, Oxford.
"1st June.

"DEAREST LETTY,—

"The College is giving a Commemoration Ball this year. Would you like to come up for it? Dr. Fyfield and I will be delighted, if you can. The girls say you *must*. It's for the 22nd. Come a day or two earlier, if possible, and stay the week.

"Love from the household,
"Ever yours sincerely,
"EMILY FYFIELD."

"Very pleasant indeed," said Miss Shackleton. "You'd better see about your frocks to-day. There's not too much time."

"Most assuredly, my wise and prudent Aunt. I fly."

"Answer your invitation before you go out. If you leave it over, you'll forget and forget."

Letty did as she was bid, and went off singing. She could have wished nothing better. The Fyfields were old friends. She had been at school with the girls, Amy, Christine, and the infant Barbara. It was some time since she had paid them a visit. That was before Dr. Fyfield was elected Master. They had lived then in Norham Gardens. To stay in College was a double attraction to Letitia, for the Master's Lodgings were ideal. The house dated from Jacobean times. It was legendary. Letty had had a glimpse of it in old Dr. Paddick's day, just enough to make her long for more intimate acquaintance. And now that was assured, with the added glamour of Commem. week. Three cheers for Mrs. Fyfield and the Master, and the girls, and Oxford, and river parties and luncheon parties, and tea with men in their rooms—fun without end, and, in chief, the ball!

Amid the many engagements of the season, the Oxford visit remained uppermost in Letty's thoughts and desires. She counted the days. But at last she found herself in a comfortable corner of a corridor carriage, five minutes out of Paddington.

"Only one little hour and thirteen minutes now," she said, looking at her watch, "and then the City of Bells!"

Out of the hot, dusty suburbs into the cool country, and so to the cooler river regions. The Thames played hide-and-seek, then remained constant. Sandford, Kennington Island—Letty rejoiced to see them all—Iffley Church and Mill—the mill shorn of its old glories since the fire—and at last the towers and spires of the adorable city, ever shifting in giddy dance as their parallax altered with the motion of the train—Christ Church, Christ Church Hall, Merton, All Saints Church, high St. Mary's, then a duller stretch in the final rush to the long platforms, alive with a summery throng.

Letty stood up and scanned the faces of the crowd as the train slowed down. She waved her hand. There they were, Amy and Christine, and—yes, it was—it must be the kid Babs. At least, she used to be a kid, but actually her hair was up and her frocks were long. The cheek of it!

It was the kid Babs who got first to the carriage door.

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"Hullo, Letty!" she cried, plunging at the guest and giving her a big hug. "Here you are! This is too lovely! Dear old thing!" Evidently she was still to a great extent the kid Babs, irrepressible as ever. She beckoned to the others. "These are my little sisters, Amy and Christine. Shake hands, dears, and behave pretty to the nice young lady from London."

"Oh, chuck it, Babs!" said Amy, laughing as she kissed Letty. Amy was a fat, fair, rosy, good-natured creature, dressed like a pillow-case with a string round its middle.

"Barbara, remember you're in a public place!" Christine exclaimed, knitting intellectual brows. Christine just missed being very pretty, with exquisite colouring, delicate features, and most fascinating dark hair, crimping in natural waves over her temples, but short sight gave her a strained and slightly severe look. She hated to wear needful eyeglasses, and stoutly denied that she was a blue-stocking. If she were, she had learned also the art of dress. The townees called her "the elegant Miss Fyfield." Amy they knew as "the nice Miss Fyfield." Babs was "that awful Missie Fyfield." She was Christine in a more opulent edition physically; mentally, her negation. The same colour, but richer and fuller, a beauty almost Spanish. Scantling, the minor poet of Corpus, in a sonnet much admired by the elect, called her "The Black Rose."

When the greetings were finished, and they were driving to St. Bartholomew's, Letty looked Babs over attentively.

"Know me again, Miss Fortnum?" Babs asked.

"Scarcely, my Infant," she said; "you grow."

"'Spects I do. Big girl now. Coming out at the ball next week, so mind your little eye, Letty Fortnum!"

"I tremble and quail, beautiful Miss Barbara Fyfield."

"Programme's full already and running over—extras and supper-dance and all."

"The programme's not printed yet, my idiot sister," Christine remarked.

"Full, all the same. I promised Scantling just one—or was it a half? He offered me another poem to-day, so I had to do something for the poor soul. Besides, he's just got the Newdigate. He'll die happy now and go to heaven."

"Don't be profane, Babs," Amy remonstrated gently.

Barbara pulled a long face. "*Odi profanum vulg*——" she began. "How does it go, Chris?"

"I really don't know."

"Fibbist!" said Babs. "Who got an equal First in Mods., then? Who but my accomplished and charming sister Christine? And doesn't know a hackneyed tag like that! But here we are!"

St. Bartholomew's was looking its venerable best, flowers in all the windows, high summer everywhere. When Mrs. Fyfield, matronly, but still young in spirit, an elder Amy in looks and sweetness, had welcomed Letty, she told the girls that tea would be in half an hour in the Master's garden. Amy and Barbara took Letitia up to her room, a low-ceiled, dark-panelled, altogether charming retreat, with deep mullioned windows opening upon a perfect view of the college elms in the garden quad, and just a glimpse of the immemorial cedar in the Fellows' garden. Beyond rose towers and spires and buildings which the finger of Time had touched only to make their outline more worshipful.

Letitia admired the view until the lazy chime of the college clock warned her that she would be late for tea unless she made haste. On the stairs she met Barbara.

"Come on, old thing," said the Infant. "I'll pilot you. The passages are puzzling at first, inside and outside, but you'll soon get up to them. Do you know—such fun!—Christine's young man is coming to tea. Her *young man*, mark you, Miss Fortnum."

"Is she engaged?"

"Not exactly. It's not public yet, but the parent birds *quite* approve. It's a brilliant match, I do not think."

"Don't you think so, really?"

"M'm—I don't know. I suppose it is."

"What is his name?"

"The Rev. Amos Simcox."

Letitia had a slight shock. "Oh, a clergyman! Has he a good living?" she asked, recovering.

"Bless you, my dear, innocent, unacademic Miss Letitia Fortnum of London, he's the Provost of St. Austell's. He's not so oppressively reverend, either. Psychologist, chiefly, when he's at home. Great hand at ghost stories—perhaps his strongest point."

"Elderly?"

"You'll see for yourself. I shall not prejudice you further. Anyhow, Christine's devoted, and so's he."

In the garden they found the Master. Dr. Fyfield was a burly, genial person, not at all of the old and crusted donnish type. His good looks, dark eyes and hair, had

descended to Christine and Babs. He was talking to one or two undergraduates. Working term was over, but a good many St. Bartholomew's men were staying up for Commemoration.

"I met Mr. Scantling in the Corn," Mrs. Fyfield was saying, "and asked him to come along to tea. He's staying up for our ball. Oh, here he is!"

An amused smile went round among the undergraduates. All Oxford knew Scantling of Corpus and his works.

Scantling would never have been taken at first sight for a minor poet. He was short and thick-set, with droll snub features and furious red hair clipped almost to prison closeness. He overflowed with good humour, and was most wholesomely commonplace in his ordinary talk. People found it hard to connect him with his published works—he seemed most prosaic. Yet Scantling had a pretty trick of verse in a small way, and sometimes struck out a remarkable thing. "The Black Rose" was one of his great hits. That was exactly what Babs suggested. Before tea was over he and Letitia had become quite good friends. He amused her, and she attracted him, *en passant*. In secret he called her "The Joyous Daffodil," and pigeon-holed her for a sonnet to be written on Sunday. Scantling was methodical in his art, or nothing. Letitia watched to see how far the bard and Babs might be committed, if at all. But they gave very little sign of anything serious the matter with their hearts.

"You have come up at an exciting time, Miss Fortnum," Scantling remarked, handing Letty a second cup of tea.

"Yes. Commem. must be no end amusing——"

"Oh, but I didn't mean Commem. Perhaps I'd better say nothing if you haven't heard."

"I've only come from London about an hour ago."

"Then I'll say no more. Oh, here's the Provost of St. Austell's. Perhaps we'll have an expert opinion now."

In her curiosity to see the Rev. Amos, Letty paid little attention to the poet's dark sayings. In fact, she forgot all about them, and turned eagerly to see Christine's "young man," fully expecting something rather antique.

The Provost had a touch of grey over the temples, but no other sign of age. He could not have been more than forty-five. He wore flannels and carried a tennis racket. In figure he was tall and graceful, slightly Italianate in feature, with a short pointed beard, deep, speculative eyes, somewhat dreamy at times, a beautiful voice, and wonderful hands.

"Well, well, Christine," said Letty to herself, "I don't wonder you forgave him his name; he makes even Amos Simcox dignified, at any rate, and charming. Here's to you, Mrs. Simcox to be!"

"Isn't he a nice young man for a small tea-party?" whispered a voice at her ear. "Didn't I say so?"

"Not in so many words, Babs. In fact, you led me to suspect——"

"A snuffy old don! I knew it! I wanted to surprise you. Amos is top-hole. He and Chris were made for one another. Fearfully intellectual, you know. Up in the clouds. How they'll keep house I don't know. It's lucky St. Austell's is just over the garden wall, as it were—we'll be able to keep an eye on them."

As Babs chattered, Letty was watching the Provost, the Master, and Mrs. Fyfield, who were standing near the tea-table. The Provost had said something in an undertone, at which the Master shrugged his shoulders.

"All moonshine, my dear Provost, all moonshine," he remarked, with his deep, rolling laugh.

"You're a hardened sceptic, Master. Now, these phenomena——"

"Oh, please, hush!" Mrs. Fyfield whispered, glancing towards Letitia. "We have a visitor, Provost—you understand? Come and let me introduce you."

During the next quarter of an hour Letty confirmed her opinion that Christine had done well for herself. Amos was really delightful. He had plenty of small-talk, he confessed to golf, and could speak about it intelligently without being a bigot and a bore. If ghost stories were his strong point, as Babs had said, he seemed to be off them to-day. Then, without warning, he brought out the tale of the Spook-ball, and told it admirably. It was so weird and creepy that Letty, strong-minded though she was, felt glad she had heard it out of doors in the sunshine, and not by lamp-light in a legendary old house.

Bobby Scantling and several others drew near to listen.

"Of course, Mr. Provost," the poet remarked drily, "it's not *true*."

"The evidence, Scantling, is incontestable. I have a copy of it."

"You're an expert, sir; I can only bow to

your opinion, but I'm an unbeliever, I fear, in things of that sort. If I might suggest, this might be an opportunity to collect fresh evidence about——"

"Mr. Scantling!"

"Yes, Mrs. Fyfield?"

"Would you be so good as to run in to the drawing-room for my fan? It's on the piano. Really, the afternoon grows too oppressive."

As the bard returned from the house, Mrs. Fyfield met him. They spoke together for a moment before rejoining the others. Scantling did not go back to the Provost, who had moved away with Christine to a distant part of the garden. Babs and the poet went to the tennis-court and, without actually playing, knocked balls about, but oftener came down to the net to confer. They laughed much at some esoteric joke.

"Near squeak," said the Gifted One.

"Raythér," replied the Black Rose. "But it's hard lines. I'm dying to tell her, and I'm forbidden. It's bound to reach her somehow. It's all over the place. Fifty years, they say, since the last authentic instance."

"My hat!" said the poet. "All that? You surprise me. Babs—Babs darling, for the one hundred and first time, will you be my wife?"

"Wait till you can keep your one hundred and second, and then ask. Get your degree first, Solomon! Hullo, Letty! Coming to play tennis?"

"No, thank you—too hot."

The pair looked a little confused, wondering how much Letitia had overheard. As a matter of fact, she had heard a good deal before the others had noticed that she was at hand. Something was in the wind at St. Bartholomew's. Who was Babs dying to tell what? Herself, Letitia? Not very likely. Something, perhaps, to do with the announcement of Christine's engagement. Letitia was not unduly curious. At that point "the nice Miss Fyfield" joined them.

"Has Christine worked the oracle yet, Babs?" Amy asked.

"I don't know. By the by, I must remind her, before her fancy man goes. There they are, 'wropt in mistry,' as usual." She pointed to the pair, who were enjoying peripatetic philosophy in the pergola. "Not to be mysterious, we've a plant on. You know, Amos has a nephew, an awfully nice boy"—here Mr. Scantling pulled a wry face—"Dick Lathom, at St. Austell's. A night or two ago, before most of the men went down, they had a No. 1 large size rag next door, and Dick went the complete unicorn. His uncle has gated him for a fortnight. That means that poor old Dickon can't come to the ball, and he was staying up specially for it. Our only hope is the blandishments of my adorable sister. I wonder if she's trying them on now? It looks like it. Votes we run round to Pennant Quad and see how the carpenters are getting on with laying down the floor of the marquee?"

As a matter of fact, Babs was quite right. The lovers had stopped in their walk, and Christine was talking earnestly. The case of Mr. Richard Lathom occupied the attention of the court.

"'The quality of mercy,' you know, Amos," the fair pleader was saying.

"But, my dearest girl, discipline must be maintained. Dick went over the score entirely. I'm very sorry, but I mean to make him work out his sentence. Had he been no relation, it would have been easier. As it is, I simply can't relax."

"But so many of the men have gone down. It'll be forgotten by the time the Long Vacation's over."

"No; several other men who have gone down are gated next term."

"But it's Commem. week. Be an angel, Amos. Poor Babs is so disappointed."

The Provost shook his head. "Christine, dear, don't make it harder to say 'No.' And Babs will have her friend Scantling."

"Oh, Scantling! Poor Robert may be a divine poet, but he waltzes like an elephant, whereas Dick——"

"But aren't Babs and Scantling 'to be about to be,' as the Latin grammar says, or thereabouts?"

"Dear, foolish man! Babs and Scantling are a pair of play-actors. Look here, Amos, if you let Dick off, I'll get you the key of the Forbidden Postern between St. Austell's and our Little Cloister. I know where father keeps it. You can slip in at any witching hour you please, and investigate the mystery of the Dancing Lady to your heart's content. And perhaps I'll be very brave and come too."

But the Provost shook his head.

"Not even that, Christine, will bribe me. Remember, I'm the Head of a House."

"Yes, at present you are. Well, my dear man, I quite see your point. But it's hard lines on Dick. However, we'll say no more. I'm not piqued. I'm a modern young woman—I understand a man's duty."



"Letty rose and, shaking off Scantling's

The Provost smiled. He knew that his firmness in this trifling interlude had secured his future domestic peace.

That evening it was a family dinner—Letitia was the only guest. She got down first to the drawing-room, and picked up *The St. Stephen's Gazette.* After a careless glance she became fascinated with a short article. She was still absorbed when the Master came in.

"Any news, Letty?"

"Something very interesting to you, at any rate. Look there!"

Dr. Fyfield took the paper, looked casually, looked again, and frowned. "Oh, confound—I beg your pardon—but, yes, confound those London scribes!" he roared gently. "They have no reticence."

"But why, Dr. Fyfield? It's delightful."



detaining hand, stepped out upon the grass."

"I'm glad you think so, Letty. We didn't mean to say anything about it to you, in case you mightn't like it. But that's all right, if you're an *esprit fort*. I believe this is the handiwork of our friend Scantling. I know he sends notes to *The St. Stephen's Gazette*. He's an indifferent poet, but a heaven-born journalist."

"What's poor Bobby been up to now?" asked Barbara, who had just come in.

"Someone has printed that nonsense about our Dancing Lady's alleged appearance the other night. Just look at the headlines: 'Ongoings at Oxford—a Creepy College Canard—Matilda Materialises.' Note the choice alliteration, if you please, good people all!" cried the Master, exhibiting the paper scornfully to the rest of the family, now in common council assembled.

"It was bound to get out," said Christine, "but I don't like them calling it a canard. I believe in Matilda, poor darling. So does Amos."

"But," said Letty, "it is a canard, isn't it?"

"You ask Badmore if it's a canard," Dr. Fyfield suggested jocosely.

"Who is Badmore?" Letitia inquired.

"The junior porter, the man who *saw*. Personally, I suspect college ale, but Badmore is convinced. He assured me he 'adn't 'ad nothing to speak of, Bible oath, sir.'"

Still talking of the mystery, they went in to dinner. Letty was hugely intrigued with the affair. She asked the Master all sorts of questions. Was the whole story in the papers? Was it correct?

"Badmore's part is correctly enough told, but they haven't quite got hold of the original legend. If you like, I'll tell you all about it when we go into the garden for coffee."

"Oh, please do, Master! That will be lovely!"

"It won't give you bad dreams?"

"No fear. Even Edgar Allan Poe leaves me cold."

"Enviable person—Lady of Joy, Letitia!"

"Why Lady of Joy?"

"Don't you know the meaning of your lovely Latin name?"

"I never bothered about it, Master."

"What says old Aulus Gellius on the subject? *Laetitia dicitur exsultatio quaedam animi gaudio efferventior eventu rerum expetitarum.* Laetitia—that is, Joy—signifieth a certain soaring mental impulse, more ardent than mere inward gladness, arising from the happy issue of things desired. How's that for yourself, Mademoiselle?"

"Yes, that's rather *me* all right, Master. Thank you very much. But the thing I most desire at the moment is your story of the Dancing Lady of St. Bartholomew's."

"Shall we go out of doors, then? Are you ready, Madame Mère?"

"Quite ready, dear." And Mrs. Fyfield led the way to the garden.

It was a perfect Oxford evening, with soft warmth and stars in a velvet sky. Coffee was served on a terrace where a little fountain made cool music. The way down to it was by a flight of steps, on which the girls spread cushions and grouped themselves. Their elders preferred to take their ease in deep basket chairs. The Master lit his pipe, and when it was well going, he began.

"Once upon a time, Letty—you other girls may as well listen; I've been going into the records, and I've found some new points you've never heard before—once upon a time—it was during the Civil War, to be precise—St. Bartholomew's sheltered a fair damsel of the Court, Mistress Matilda Wynyates, or Wingate—it's given variously—whose father, Sir Hugh Wynyates, was in attendance on the King.

"This Sir Hugh was a sinister person, reputed to dabble in Black Art. Now, Matilda had a lover, a certain Captain John Gower, who had sided with the Parliament, and was at the time on duty before Oxford. But political differences could not wholly separate the pair. Gower was an old St. Austell's man; he knew the ins and outs of the place, and used to slip into the town when he could. The then Provost of St. Austell's, a secret Parliamentarian, used to put Gower up *sub rosa*, and give him the key of that small postern door which leads from St. Austell's into our Little Cloister. It is never opened now, although this college keeps a key. St. Austell's has one no longer. Well, to make a long story short, one evening the Cavaliers had a dance in the hall here—war can never kill these gaieties. About midnight Matilda stole out to meet Gower in the Little Cloister. They could hear the fiddlers very well from there, and Matilda proposed a private pavane on the cloister glass plot. Captain John was none of your strait-laced Puritans—he could make as good a leg as any of Rupert's men—so at it they went, and, poor things, I'm sure they enjoyed themselves. When the music stopped, their hearts went to another tune, for there stood Sir Hugh, under one of the arches, looking at them as sour as an old crab-apple. 'So, Master John,' he says, stepping on to the grass, 'this is how you besiege Oxford. But you are trapped, sir. I have friends at hand. We'll have a firing-party in the morning, or perhaps you'll dance in a hempen collar, as is a spy's due. Howbeit I owed your father some regard before these troubles came, we'll try a different conclusion first. Lug out, sir, and defend yourself!' The eye-witness, one of Wynyates' party, who set these things down—the paper was found after his death—may be trusted so far. But he now begins to mix popular superstition with fact. He says that Sir Hugh, having drawn, muttered an incantation, and with his sword described a circle on the grass round about himself. Hissing flames marked the track of the point.

"Sir Hugh made a feint at Gower, who, sword in hand, stood powerless to move, a man frozen by a spell. Laughing, Sir Hugh thrust in earnest, but Matilda leaped between the two. In that stroke the lovers took their death together. Thereat Sir Hugh, the chronicler says, blasphemed horribly, and, in a confused gabble of

unholy gibberish, called on Sathanas, Belphegor, Beelzebub and Eblis, to take him to themselves. Whereupon the cloister filled with a riot of whirling shapes, there arose a great gust of sulphurous air, and from that hour no man saw Sir Hugh Wynyates more. That's the original legend. The later story, the growth of centuries, is that Matilda, sometimes alone, sometimes with her lover, can be seen dancing on the Little Cloister lawn. This is what Badmore swears he saw. Poor Matilda! She is said to come especially when any band of fiddlers is playing dance music in St. Bartholomew's. Nor will she rest until some maiden, as young and fair as she, will dare to take the spirit in her arms and give her the kiss of peace. And that, Letty, is the story of our Dancing Lady."

"Thank you very much, Master. It's most interesting. Shall we watch for Matilda on the ball night?"

"Bold person! Unfortunately, when there's a ball, ancient college custom locks the iron gate leading from Pennant Quad to the Little Cloister. A capital sitting-out place is lost, but we hold by tradition here. Also, in Matilda's honour, a pavane is played at midnight at our college balls, although nobody can dance it nowadays."

"Some can," said Babs, unheeded.

"It's getting late," said Mrs. Fyfield. "Who says bed? I hope you'll all sleep sound, but I have my doubts. Feel creepy, Letty?"

"Not a bit. It was quite lovely."

"It's awful piffle," Babs remarked, "but the Pater yarns A 1 when he gets going. How much did you make up, Daddy?"

"Don't be flippant, Babs," Christine objected, with a little shiver. "There is a spiritual world."

They drifted indoors, and so to their various dreams. Letty felt that her first evening at St. Bartholomew's had exceeded all expectations.

The days until the ball rushed by in sunshine and a round of pleasant engagements, amid which Matilda was somewhat forgotten. The girls went to the Encænia, and did their best to keep straight faces when Mr. Robert Scantling, in a white tie, ascended the rostrum to recite his Newdigate Prize Poem—"Attila the Hun." It was neither better nor worse than the ruck of such efforts, not a patch upon "The Black Rose," but a topical allusion—not then odious—"Strike with your mailèd fist," drew considerable applause. "A heaven born journalist," murmured Dr. Fyfield to Mr. Simcox; "but an indifferent poet."

Then came the great night. At ten the college was overflowing with guests. Pennant Quad, floored and tented, the roof of the marquee draped within with the college colours, made a divine ballroom. Letty chased the glowing hour with flying feet; the band was super-excellent, her partners, for the most part, very agreeable. But, for the acknowledged belle, she seemed a little distraite and preoccupied. Close on midnight Scantling came to claim her for a dance. She proposed to sit out, but they had hardly found a corner when she suggested a stroll. It was another gorgeous velvety night.

"But where are you going?" Scantling said presently.

To her reply he shook his head. "No use—locked. Don't you know the college rule?"

"You're scarcely up to date, Mr. Scantling. Queer things have happened. This afternoon, when the senior porter came to the Master for the key of the iron gate, it had vanished. And the key of the little door leading to St. Austell's was gone, too! There was a nice to-do, but no solution. They had to content themselves with putting up a notice STRICTLY PRIVATE at the entrance to the Little Cloister. The porter proposed a chain and padlock, but the Master somehow would not consent. I believe privately he wants to break the custom. Heads won't fall if people disobey the notice. It's the loveliest sitting-out place in the world. Come along!" So they broke bounds boldly.

The monks had left a stone bench running round the inner wall of the cloister. There the two trespassers sat down and looked through the opposite arch at the play of moonlight and shadows on the lawn.

"How well the music sounds here!" said Letitia. "I wonder if——"

"Yes, I wonder," said the understanding and romantic bard. "Ah, that's our dance over, and twelve striking! Now for the pavane. There it goes! Isn't it quaint?"

"Oh, Heavens!" cried Letty, a moment later, catching Scantling's arm.

"Jehoshaphat!" exclaimed the poet.

Out upon the lawn glided a white figure and stood motionless. Then from the direction of St. Austell's appeared another shape with cloak and sword. The two approached, bowed low, embraced, and then, linking hands, began to dance the stately old measure.

Letty rose and, shaking off Scantling's detaining hand, stepped out upon the grass. With a swimming motion, keeping time to the rhythm of the music, she glided up to the dancers.

"My dear, my dear," Scantling heard her say, "I have come to give you release and rest."

The shapes stood still. The Dancing Lady shrieked and recoiled, but Letty flung her arms about the ghost, and, it seemed to Scantling, the dead and living kissed.

As their lips met, it was Letty's turn to start away with a faint scream.

"What — what —— Good Heavens, *you?*"

"The same, all alive and kicking, and so's Captain John. Let me introduce Dick Lathom. This is his poor little bit of the St. Bartholomew's Ball. Don't tell anybody—we're engaged."

"And here," said a big, round voice, "to make things complete, is the heavy father. Babs, you monkey, did you steal the keys?" And from the shadow of another cloister bay came forth the Master, with Amy following.

"Only the key of St. Austell's door, Daddy. Innocent of the other. I meant to take it, too, but it was gone. What's brought you here?"

"Amy's irresistible curiosity to see if anything queer would happen."

"A curiosity shared by two others," said another voice, and from the opposite ambulatory of the cloister appeared the Provost with Christine on his arm.

"Too bad, Babs," said Christine, "just when I had committed theft to prove the reality of the Dancing Lady."

"Since you've heard, Daddy," Babs entreated, "may Dick and I be——"

"Engaged? I'll sleep upon it. You're both young and foolish. Provost, shouldn't you order the rebel Gower, or Lathom, back to his rooms?"

"By rights, yes. But, if he'll take off those romantic togs, I'll let him stay, seeing he didn't get his ghostly dance finished. But he mustn't get engaged just yet in the flesh."

"That will be a little balm to poor Scantling," laughed Dr. Fyfield.

"Master," said the poet, emerging last of all, "I need it not. Bab's comedy with me was all poppy cock. By your leave, sir, I shall one day ask the hand of Amy."

"What—all my pretty chickens at one fell swoop! Go and dance, sir—go and dance to-night. To-morrow write prose for the papers and make a position for yourself, and we'll see. Let's get a move on."

"I regret losing Matilda, our dear ghost," sighed Christine. "I suppose we're all sworn to secrecy."

"So far," the Master agreed, "you are. But whose pluck and kind heart laid our Dancing Lady's ghost? We must give the credit publicly to Letitia!"

HEARTSEASE.

IN my garden heartsease grows,
Honeysuckle, thyme, and rose;
Low the gate, and loose the pin,
He who will may enter in.

Smooth the path to aching feet,
Kind with many a garden-seat;
Gentle is the wind that strays
In and out the garden ways.

Many a flower of gaudy cheer,
Many a bright leaf is not here;
In and out my garden sings
Many a bird with humble wings.

Should you tire of forest rude,
Mounting path, and fierce sharp wood,
Here is quiet and repose:
In my garden heartsease grows.



SHEPHERDS FROM MOSUL, WHO ARE RESTING IN THE SYRIAN DESERT NEAR PALMYRA, ON THEIR WAY TO DAMASCUS.

ON THE WAY TO BAGDAD

THE ANCIENT PALMYRA AS IT IS TO-DAY

By C. CHICHESTER

PALMYRA, or "Tadmor in the Wilderness," was built by Solomon, as we read in the Book of Kings, and there can be little doubt that the ruins now before us occupy the site, as they bear the name, of the city founded by the great King of Israel.

But it is to a woman—Zenobia, the Queen of the East—that Palmyra owes its high position in the annals of antiquity. The virtue, the wisdom, and the heroic spirit of that extraordinary woman have never been equalled.

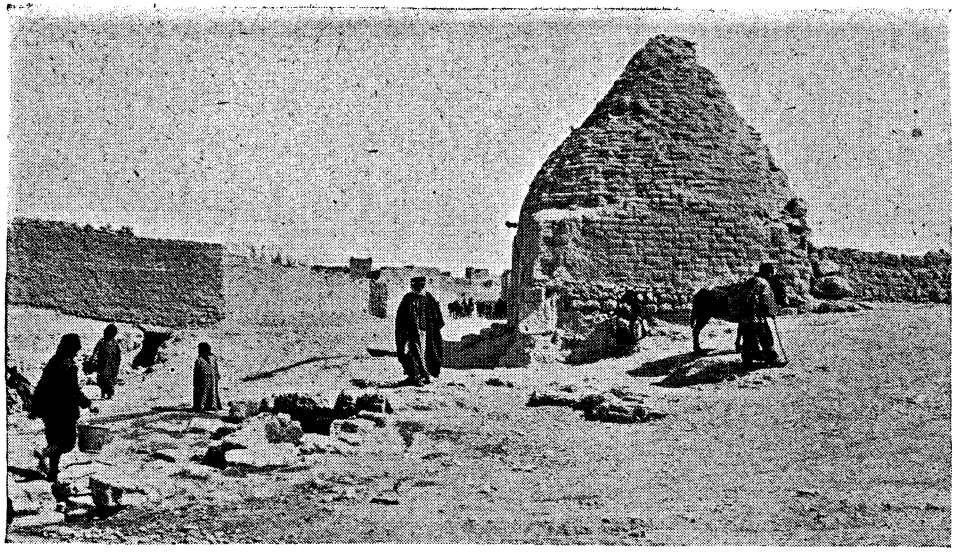
Her end was tragic. The Romans invaded her country in A.D. 270, defeated her, and carried her a prisoner to Rome. There, covered with jewels, she was led by a golden chain along the Via Sacra, in front of the triumphant Aurelian, whilst all Rome looked on and gloated over the downfall of the great Arabian Queen.

Except for the caravans that halt there, between Damascus and Bagdad, Palmyra has few visitors. The journey there entails many difficulties and dangers; but we were anxious to see this city—"noble in situation, in wealth, in sunshine and pleasant waters," as Pliny calls it—and, having made all necessary arrangements for a camp and escort of soldiers, we started early one morning from Damascus by the road which is still called the Zenobian Way.

About half-way between Karyatein and Palmyra we stopped for lunch at Kasr-el-Her, an immense Roman tower or barracks. On it the Arab has inscribed many *wusms*, or tribal marks, so that it has become a kind of standard by which the brands on camels strayed or stolen might be identified.

Occasionally, on the side of the track, a few stones piled together mark the last resting-place of a poor traveller who had died either from hunger or disease, or been "removed" for the sake of plunder.

That night our camp was pitched at Ein-el-Beda (the White Fountain), right in the middle of the desert. In the stillness of the night I was suddenly startled by hearing



M'HIN, A FOUNTAIN AND SMALL MOSQUE ON THE WAY TO PALMYRA.

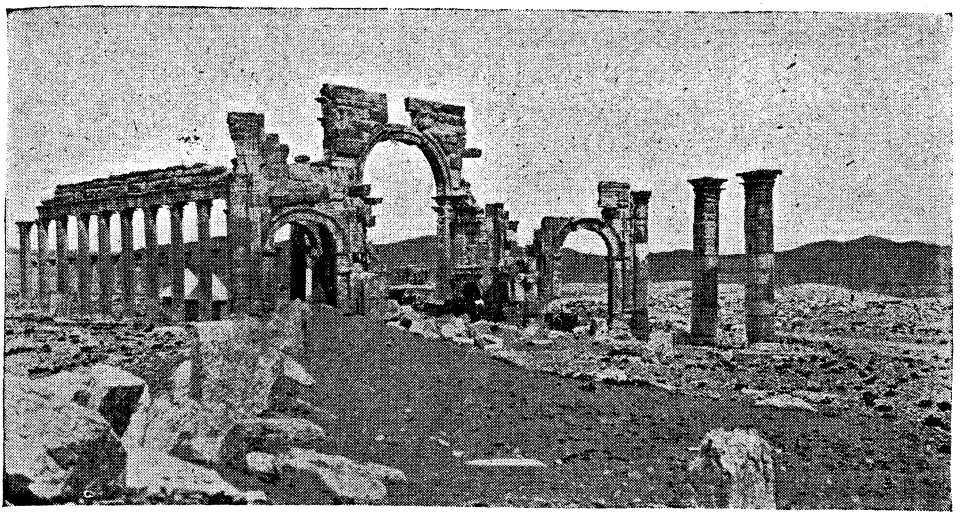
a man shouting at the top of his voice. Possibly the Bedouins were attacking us. Joseph, our dragoman, soon reassured me. It was the usual announcement warning Bedouins who might be roaming about not to come near the camp.

"To everyone who hears my voice: The people who are camping here are not merchants, or people carrying money, that you should come near them, and whoever comes near them, it will be his own fault. Soldiers are guarding them, and they have no other way of punishing you but with a bullet." Three times in the night is this warning repeated, and they calculate it can be heard a mile off.

Next day we reached Palmyra. The entrance is guarded by mortuary towers—the "house of eternity" of the Palmyrene—of which there are only a couple of



PALMYRA: THE LONELY COLUMN.



PALMYRA: THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH.

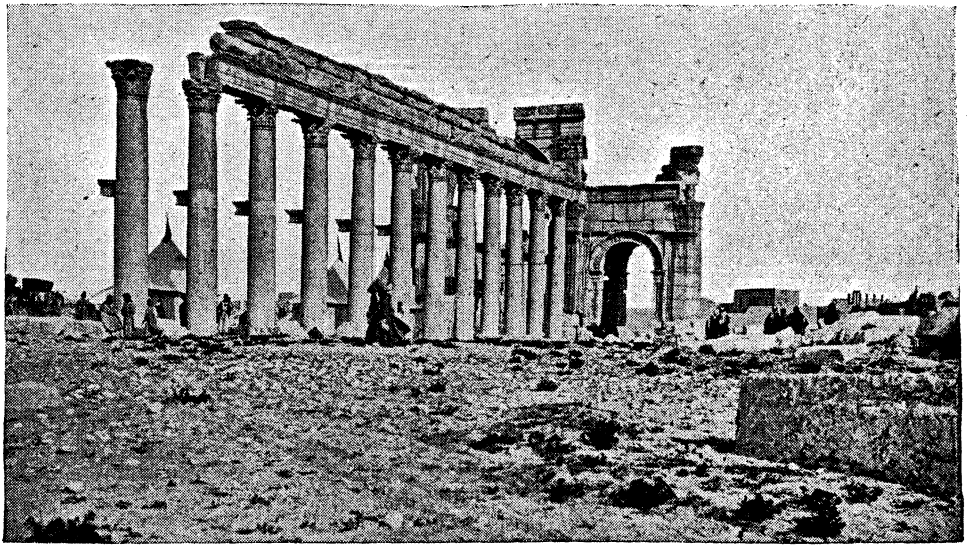
dozen remaining of the original one hundred and fifty.

Skirting the tombs, we bore to the right, and then below, in the plain, within a square mile of fawn-coloured earth, lay the city in all its beauty and in all its sadness.

The most striking feature is the long colonnade stretching from the base of the Castle Hill up to the triple or triumphal arch at the eastern end, facing the mighty Temple of the Sun. Beyond is the Arabian desert, and there, on the borders, one solitary column seems to point towards Bagdad and the Euphrates—the loneliest and saddest thing in all Palmyra.

Originally there were four rows of columns, a central and two side avenues, which extended through the city to a distance of about 4000 feet. Each pillar had on its inner sides a bracket for a statue of some distinguished Palmyrene. There were about fifteen hundred columns, and of these only one hundred and fifty remain; but the statues have long since disappeared.

The chief pieces of sculpture have been put into the barracks, out of harm's way. One is a very fine torso of the god of Wine holding a drinking-cup, and another is part of a sarcophagus with four heads on it. Near the colonnade, lying in a mingled heap, were



PALMYRA: COLONNADE LEADING UP TO THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH, AND BEYOND, IN THE DISTANCE, IS THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN.

some beautiful specimens of cornices and capitols.

The modern village is built of miserable mud huts inside the Temple of the Sun, and much disfigures it; but this is of little concern to the Bedouin.

An important personage of Tadmor is the Sheikh Mouhamed El Abdaliah, a fine, handsome man with courteous manners. We exchanged visits, and dined with him the night before we left.



PALMYRA: PART OF A SARCOPHAGUS. THE GOD OF WINE HOLDING A DRINKING-CUP.

Well-nigh seventeen centuries have passed away since the time of Zenobia, but her rose-red city still lies where it has fallen, so beautiful even in its decay, its ancient beauties unmingled with any modern thing.

Should the spirit of Zenobia still haunt her ruined city, one can imagine her beside the lonely column, watching the steady advance of the British troops across the Arabian desert, and inviting them to halt and be refreshed at her warm springs, then speeding them to the fertile lands beyond. There they can expect a warm welcome from the Syrian people, who have long wanted to live in peace and freedom under British rule.



PALMYRA: FOUR FIGURES ON A SARCOPHAGUS.

BLINDED

By LILIAN HOLMES

DEAR, will you take my hand—as lovers do—
And lead me, for a little, here and there—
Through woods where once the glossy king-cups grew,
And bluebells spilt their fragrance on the air—



And let me feel the crumpled primrose sheaves,
And hear the blackbird scolding as he flies,
And sense re-birth amid decaying leaves,
And learn to look at Spring with shuttered eyes?



Down by the brooks I'll gather watercress,
And strip young osiers into wands of white;
Fashion green glory out of nothingness,
And learn that all is day where all seems night.



Dear, will you be my guide and lend your aid—
God! that a man should such a borrower be!
So may I see more clearly, undismayed,
Through windows of a last year's memory?

A NICE GIRL

By G. B. LANCASTER

Illustrated by Stanley Davis

UNDER the broad hat Dorothy's pretty face showed almost sulky—quite sulky, if one believed Vera, who could always be trusted to be candid, if not correct. But the day promised to be broiling, even for a New Zealand midsummer; this train crawled always, and shunted often, and stopped everywhere, and there would be nine solid hours of travel in which to suffer Vera, who, being still in the hoydenish school-girl stage, had a relish for every kind of movement and a positive instinct for picking up undesirable acquaintances and inviting them home. This was the home-going now, after a long visit to the south, and Dorothy, with all the stern wisdom of twenty-three, had laid down rigid rules for her young sister.

"You are not to wriggle about all over the carriage, Vera, and you are not to talk to people at the stations or on the train—not unless they have babies. Then you can nurse the sticky little beasts, if you want to. And you are *not* to accept lollies or fruit or anything from strangers. I was positively ashamed of you coming down. You even took that banana the Maori offered you, and you couldn't have been hungry—you'd been stuffing all day."

"I didn't want to hurt his feelings." Beneath the braided black hair Vera's rosy face shone with virtue. "Mum says we must always consider others."

"There are—limits." In Dorothy's mind Vera had overreached them long since. "A lady never allows liberties, especially when she's travelling without a man. You must learn to behave like a lady now you're past fourteen."

"It's so beastly dull." Vera's long limbs tied themselves in objecting knots. "Doll, can't I even talk to a returned soldier, if there's one about?"

"Gracious, I should think not! They always fancy girls are running after them. You mustn't even *look* at one. I never do, for they always expect it."

"Poor brutes!" commented Vera. And underbreath she added: "And poor me, unless——"

With that "unless" still upholding her, an hour later she plunged after her sister through the second-class corridor carriage crammed with farmers, shearers, a knot of gold-diggers going up to Thames, old women with market-baskets, young women with babies, boys and girls with bananas, and came at last to the first-class end carriage, empty but for one freckled and weary-looking girl in a corner. Here Dorothy set down parasol, basket, magazines, dust-cloak, and a huge bunch of roses, shook out her dainty skirts, preened her pretty self at her vanity mirror, and prepared to make the best of a long day. Vera flung off her hat and settled, with knees on seat and sharp elbows on sill, to watch from the open window as the train drew, slowly grunting, out of the little town. Faces on the platform slid behind, and at the last possible moment the door at the carriage end flew open, and a young soldier dashed in with two tea-cups on a little tray. He dropped down panting beside the bored and freckled girl, and his voice exulted.

"Managed it! But, by Jove, I thought I'd have to leave it, there was such a crowd. Here you are! Hot, too. Good, isn't it?"

Vera was staring with all her powers, and Dorothy sneaked a look over her magazine, for the heavy look on the girl's face did not lighten as she took the cup with a curt word of thanks.

"Engaged and quarrelled, or honeymoon. What a cat! And he's just back, by the look of him."

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He was one of those bronzed, hardened, and capable youths of whom New Zealand had been full before the War. Dorothy had seen few enough of late, and her heart went out to him as he talked and sipped his tea ecstatically, for he was so alive that he seemed to light the carriage up, and his laugh was the freshest she had ever heard. His eyes, bright as a bird's, darted over the girls and away again, not too fast for interest nor too slow for courtesy. And on this point Dorothy was somewhat of a martinet. Vera pulled her sleeve.

"He's a gunner. See his badge? And he's got a gold wounded-stripe. Oh, Doll, *how* do you s'pose he got it?"

Surreptitiously Dorothy kicked her. Then she spoke with dignity.

"Here are some lollies. You can read or look out of the window, Vera. But please don't talk, for I want to read."

She retired firmly behind the magazine. The train crawled up a steep grade. Vera wriggled and muttered to herself. At the far end of the carriage the bright-eyed gunner talked eagerly, and the bored girl listened with effort.

"Cat!" thought Dorothy again. "If I——" And then she bit her lip and stared from the window. Even Vera had a special boy in France, to whom she wrote long blotched letters. Dorothy had none. Her eyes clouded wistfully as the deep flax gullies gave place to tussock land, patched with sheep, and then to sandy river-bed with stagnant streams of water and tall cabbage-trees reeling in heat-haze. That bored girl was hearing about Gallipoli. The magic word came more than once above the rock and rattle of the train. If *she* had been the listener—— The train slowed, stopped. Bright eyes looked over the top of her magazine, and the gunner said—

"There's a refreshment-room here. I'll bring you and your sister some tea with ours, shall I?"

He was gone before she could gasp. Then, choking the impulse to slap Vera for unashamed elation, she turned to the bored girl.

"It is very kind of your—friend."

"He's no friend of mine." The bored girl sat up with explosive force. "I never saw him till yesterday. Then he offered to bring me tea, just as he's done to you now."

"Oh!" Dorothy felt herself suddenly freeze. "Really? If he is *that* sort——"

"He isn't. Oh, don't be stupid!" The bored girl spoke now with a kind of repressed passion. "Can't you see that? It's *because* he isn't that I can't stop him. He's a nice boy—a really nice boy. And he's been bringing me tea—cups and basins and buckets and barrels of it—till I wish I was dead! Oh-h!"

Vera sniggered, but Dorothy's large eyes widened. Unconsciously she was the little haughty maiden who had daunted men before this day.

"I should imagine you could tell him you didn't want it."

"Tell him! Heavens!" The voice of the bored girl rose, and she reddened beneath the freckles. "Wait till he talks to you about the ladies of England, and all they did for him, and how delighted he is to be able to do something for a lady again, after nearly three years of soldiering. Why should *I* have to suffer for those ladies of England? I never did them any harm, but I wish I could now. Tea! Buckets and basins and barrels of tea!"

"I should think"—Dorothy was still unresponsive—"that you could tell him you didn't care for the expense."

"Gracious! You don't imagine he lets me pay!"

Dorothy stiffened, dropping her words through prim red lips.

"I can't imagine anything else—with a stranger."

"Oh, all right!" The girl flung herself back, becoming bored again. "Wait till he talks to you, that's all!"

Dorothy got her purse out and sat rigid, but inwardly she flamed. Vera sighed, looking sideways through her black hair.

"He is a darling, though." She spoke half to herself. "A puffeck darling—with the nicest eyes——"

"Shut up!" snapped Dorothy. And then appeared a huge tin tray heavy with cakes and steaming cups, and topped by a face that shone like the full moon.

"Good old morning tea—what?" he hailed them cheerfully. "My word, it does make a chap feel at home again! Your cup's on the right flank, behind the seed-cake emplacement, Miss Cole. Lots of milk." His sunny gaze was turned on Dorothy. "I brought a weak and a strong, not knowing which you'd like. I like either—too many times when I couldn't get any to be particular now. It's all good, anyway. And cakes—your sister likes cakes, I bet."

He beamed on the enchanted Vera, whose fingers tingled to touch that gold magic stripe which made him free of all the



essentials of this present world, and Dorothy spoke crisply.

"Take your cup and a cake, Vera. It is very good of this gentleman to trouble. Here is what I owe you, I think."

He glanced carelessly at the coin and sipped his tea.

"Rotten cheap, isn't it? Many's the time I'd have given a pound for a pannikinful. And many's the cup I've got for nothing,



"'Managed it! But, by Jove, I thought I'd have to leave it, there was such a crowd.'"

too. Those ladies of England, you know—they're a marvel! Out in France, on beastly long train journeys in the middle of wet nights, or when we were dry as h—as a limekiln, or when we were coming down wounded, with the fever on us, there they were at nearly every halt, shoving their little trollies along the platform, or racing

around with trays, or pouring tea behind little makeshift counters. Same in England—always there with big aprons and big teapots and big smiles and lashings of sandwiches and cheery words. My word, how we did love 'em!"

"Yes, naturally. Please take this——"

"Felt funny, too"—he stirred his tea reminiscently—"after having to tumble off chairs and open doors and wait on women generally ever since I was a kid. I can tell you, it *did* feel rum to have them always waiting on me, y'know. And giving me things—from penny smokes up to motor drives. Crumbs, they were good to us! Dear old things, every one of 'em! But you don't know how jolly it feels to get back to *yourself* and wait on a lady again. Miss Cole"—he nodded towards the bored girl—"she understands. Tumbled to it at once, with just that delicate sort of instinct women have. You couldn't make a man understand with a club—unless he'd been through it. Have some more cake? Awfully nice she's been to me. I say, she isn't drinking her tea!" He lurched away with the tray as the train rounded a sharp elbow, and Dorothy heard him asking concerned questions. Vera was going off in suppressed explosions, and Dorothy dug frantic fingers into her knee.

"Be quiet! There's nothing to laugh at. He just doesn't understand that a girl can't allow—I won't let him do it again. Be *quiet*, Vera!"

"You talked to him, an' you let him give you things! He, he! What about the Maori?" gurgled Vera. But Dorothy would not hear. With red lips pursed and pretty brows drawn down, she entrenched herself behind the magazine again, and spoke no more until a scream from the other end of the carriage brought her gasping to her feet. The train had waddled down a steep incline to a small, dusty, weather-board township warping in the still heat; the gunner was gone, and the bored girl leaned against the door, wild-eyed.

"Stop him! Why didn't you stop him?" she wailed. "He'll bring us more tea! Oh, what shall I do? The fifth time since six-thirty! Oh, what shall I *do?*"

"He won't be such a fool," said Dorothy crisply.

"You don't know him as I do. All yesterday, and five times to-day, and it's not twelve o'clock."

"He says that the ladies of England——" began Vera, and the girl turned on her with cold malevolence.

"Don't you speak to me of the ladies of England!" she said.

"I think you're exciting yourself unnecessarily. There now! The train has started, and he hasn't come back. He's just gone into a smoking-carriage for——"

The words died on Dorothy's mouth as the door opened and, battered, breathless, and beaming, the gunner arrived with three sloppy cups of tea.

"Best I could do." He dealt them out unhesitating. "Sorry there's no cake, but I nearly missed the 'bus completely. There were two dear old ladies further down who hadn't anyone to look after them, and by the time I'd got them fixed, there wasn't more than just time. But I was determined you should have some tea if I had to knock everyone in the buffet down." He looked round pridefully. "I'll never forget one night in England—going right up to a hospital in the North. And we had an hour's wait at one station, and no one to bring us anything at all. 'Bout the only time they slipped us up—hospital cases. But I'll never forget my disappointment as long as I live. Some of the chaps cried. I was one. So I was *determined* you shouldn't be disappointed."

"It was—very good of you," murmured the bored girl, and sipped the cup.

"It was dear of you," said Vera, and let her hand casually touch the gold stripe.

"Thank you." Dorothy held her cup at arm's length. "I don't want any tea. Please drink it yourself."

He shook his head, smiling at her, and for the first time she realised the vigorous genial personality behind the good-looking young face.

"Not on your life! I don't say I wouldn't have done it once—in England. One doesn't feel so much a man as a—a sort of perambulating obedience there. You get used to sitting or to lying in bed while a lady stands. Now—why, I'd no more take your tea than I'd take your seat! You see, the ladies of England——"

"I take no interest whatever in the ladies of England," said Dorothy.

She drank off the tea very much as Socrates must have drunk the hemlock, and retreated with determination to her fortifications. But Vera went shamelessly over to the enemy, sitting by him, fingering that gold stripe openly, and listening with rapt face to his low talk. Dorothy worked herself into a cold fury.

"She'll be asking him to the house next—

after all I've told her, too!" She thrilled with what she believed to be her anger. "And he has quite impudence enough to come. Been going about with cheap sorts of girls, of course, and now he thinks we're all alike. He'll find out his mistake before I've done with him! He'll learn that he can't treat *me* as he's treating silly Miss Cole."

Stiffly she sat with eyes on book, while heavy bush rose about them, and Vera and the gunner rushed from window to window, hilariously greeting old friends. Tall, bloated nikau palms had evidently been cherished intimates of the gunner's childhood. Also tangles of vines and supple-jack and kia-kia and flowering clematis such as wound about the thick limbs of totara and titoki and birch, and a hundred great trees more. He had reminiscences of the little brooks, brown as his own clear eyes; endearing words for the steep banks of dark maidenhair fern such as a man loves to lie and dream on; rollicking whistles for the weka that stalked, with stiff tail pumping up and down, out from a clump of manuka. Hand in hand, the child and the man, forgetting Gallipoli's horror and England's pain, revelled in the sights and sounds and smells of home again, and Dorothy saw the glow on the brown face and the suddenly tender eyes as the call of the mock-a-mock rang sharply up from a deep fern gully. Then she bit her lips and read: "How little we understand ourselves!" said Adele sadly. "We are unusually weakest when we think ourselves most strong." Steeled by this reflection, she kept her eyes down while the train slouched up to an open platform in the bush and decided to rest there. Maoris with little rush baskets of fish and fruit came peering at the windows, and the gunner's voice cut suddenly through the weak protestations of the bored girl.

"But *of course* I did. I wired for it from the last stop. Lunch for four, and lashings of tea. It'll be ready. They told me so. I'll just go and see——"

He disappeared, and the bored girl faced a white-lipped Dorothy with blazing eyes, and shrank back a little.

"How dare you let him order lunch for me? How *dare* you?"

"I didn't. You heard what he said, I suppose. Why didn't you stop him?"

"I never guessed. But you know what he's like. You *said* so. And because you have been encouraging him——"

"Encouraging him! Do you imagine a girl—any girl—wants to drink buckets and barrels and——"

"You've got him into the habit of it; it's your business to get him out."

"I didn't. It's those—those unspeakable ladies of England. If only they had to drink——"

"Oh, oh, oh!" Vera rocked herself with squeaks of joy. "If you two only knew how funny you are! He's such a darling, too!"

"It's unpardonable," said Dorothy. "I shall refuse to eat or drink a word of his lunch—I mean a crumb—even if I am hungry. He'll be asking us to go to a cinema with him next! Vera, if you speak to him again——"

"He has asked me, and I'm going when we get to Pahiatua. He means to stay there, he says."

"I told you so." Dorothy stamped her foot at the bored girl. "That's what comes of allowing an absolute bounder——"

Here the absolute bounder returned, followed by a waiter with a huge tray, and carrying himself a small tray with the inevitable tea. He flung orders and largesse to the waiter royally, and spread the meal with a discriminate hand.

"Many's the picnic I've had on good old Mount Cook and along Milford Sound. And many since—in some queer places, too." He portioned out the ham and chicken with artless skill, but Dorothy was human enough to feel more than a twinge of pleasure in that the best pieces indubitably went to her. Besides, it smelt good, and tea and cake are not sufficient sustenance for a healthy maiden. "I'll eat it because I want it; but I'll pay him afterwards for all," she decided, as knives and forks began to clatter on the plates. The gunner talked—casually, as though for the sheer delight of it. He spoke of Egyptian camps, where every mouthful gritted the teeth, and the men rejoiced when jam ran out, because there was one thing less to eat sand with; he spoke of hard-tack, and tea made with lukewarm water out of petrol-tins—unwashed tins—on Gallipoli, and meals of sorts in the Flanders mud; and he spoke of the mates with whom he had shared them.

"Gives a chap a rum kind of feeling to hear that one of the fellows you've been feeding with an hour ago has gone West," he said, looking from the window, where a sheer hill of shining foliage fell away to the pale gold of a tussock flat with blue sky beyond. "But we get used to it," His eyes came

frankly back to Dorothy's fair face. "When you remember that for yourself any minute may be the next, so to speak, you get used to that and to everything else, you know."

Dorothy did not know. For a moment the paucity of her knowledge, as compared with his, abashed her. Then she snatched at her rights again. He might know much, this intolerable young man, but he had yet to learn what was due to womanhood; and since the ladies of England had apparently not been able to teach him, it was necessary that she should do so. She ate her salad with stately dignity, peeled her peaches with slim, dainty fingers, and replied in monosyllables dropped through prim, pretty lips. Soon the gunner ceased to talk to her; but he watched her all the more, and this did not displease her. And then he really did go away for a smoke, and Dorothy drew her purse out.

"I'm going to put the money for this and the other teas on the tray," she announced. "He'll find it when he takes the things away at the next station, and, if he has an ounce of nice feeling, he'll know what he ought to do. Yes, you can put yours there, too, if you like. It is the most tactful way when one is dealing with—these sorts of people."

But when, at the next stop, he caught up the tray and ran out with it, she found her breath coming a little faster. His manner was young, but he was no boy, after all, and one never could tell what these men with square chins and decisive movements would do. In less than two minutes she found out. Through the window a shower of silver coin rattled down into her lap, and at her ear a heated voice said swiftly: "I've no use for these."

He was gone again before she could gasp, and she stared down on them blankly, while Vera rolled on the seat with mirth.

"There's nothing like tact, really," murmured the bored girl. And then Dorothy sat bolt upright with flushed cheeks.

"When you have to do with a cad, you can't treat him as a gentleman," she said. "I'll just make that clear to him when he comes back!"

"He—he's a nice boy, you know."

The bored girl moved uneasily.

"Very. And he will most certainly bring us some more tea in a minute."

But it was fruit this time—piled baskets of plums and peaches and nectarines and passion-fruit, and he seemed to have forgotten that little affair of the window. Dorothy waited until he paused opposite her, offering peaches warm-tinted as her own soft skin. Then she held that silver bone of contention towards him.

"I have not paid you for the other meals yet," she said icily.

He banged the basket down with an exclamation, and a light which she did not like sprang into his eyes.

"Can't a man offer a lady a cup of tea without being paid like a servant for it?"

"No"—her heart wavered, but she kept her voice firm—"not unless the lady wishes it."

"And why don't you wish it?" His voice was dangerously quiet. She had a moment's belief that he looked like this, spoke like this, when he was preparing for that mysterious operation known as "going over the top."

"I don't care about being beholden to a stranger," she said.

"I wonder how many strangers I've been beholden to in these three years?" He was speaking half to himself. Then he looked straight at her, somewhat imperiously. "Are you really so narrow-minded as all that?"

"It is not narrow-minded." She was on fire now. "I am not accustomed to being treated as a beggar, nor to having my expenses paid and myself talked to by anyone who chooses to be impertinent."

"Look here," he said earnestly, "you've got hold of the wrong end of the stick. I can assure you that in England the ladies——"

"I will not have them hurled at my head!" she blazed out. "Suppose they did give you tea and socks and motor drives at every single station you ever stopped at, that's no reason why you should unload your gratitude on me."

For a moment he looked surprised; then he became so extremely solemn that an older woman would have suspected laughter behind.

"Perhaps it isn't, now you come to mention it. I guess I've been clumsy. They never made me feel a beggar or insulted—the English ladies didn't."

"That's quite different. One is ready to do what one can for soldiers——"

"I'm a soldier," he said, with an innocent air of discovery.

Dorothy had a feeling that something like crackers was going off in the direction of Vera.

"I mean a wounded soldier," she said sharply.

With puzzled brows he glanced down at his sleeve and then back at her, and a perfect whirl of fury caught her up, so that she almost boxed his ears.

"Anyone but a cad would understand what I mean!" she cried, and, with a passionate gladness, she saw his face grow white.

"You mean," he said slowly, "that when a chap is half off his head with joy at getting home, he has to get girls who aren't particular to share it with him? Taking it all round, we soldiers have lived pretty much apart from ladies these three years, and now we want to talk to them, do you see? We'd *sooner* talk to ladies than to the vulgarer kind, many of us. But if all the old hidebound before-the-war conventions are going to hold—if girls and men haven't learnt to see some things a bit straighter—well, I guess it's going to be the worse for us, that's all. Good gracious! There are girls in the second-class carriages to-day—not so pretty as you, but heaps jollier—do you imagine I couldn't have given them all the tea and talk I'd wanted *if* I'd—wanted to?"

"A man should know how to behave, wherever he is."

"You go to the War for two years, and then come back and tell me that," he said, with sudden grimness. "Just now you're talking rubbish. I was the loneliest pelican ever stepped yesterday, and if Miss Cole hadn't been good enough to let me bring her tea two or three times——"

"Eighteen times!" The bored girl, who had sat dumb and troubled, was galvanised into intense feeling. "Eleven times yesterday and seven to-day! And I *know* you'll do it again!"

"Why, sure," he answered readily. "As many times as I can, Miss Cole, and with great pleasure." He looked again at Dorothy. "I say that if women would be more comradely and natural with men, there'd be a—a sight less of the false modesty and rottenness that we get tangled up in now. You girls are mighty clever with your Red Cross business when we're sick. When we're well, you either chuck yourselves at our heads or bite 'em off. I—— Why, here's Taihora! We only stop three minutes, but I'll get you some tea, Miss Cole."

He went out, carrying his head a little high. Dorothy walked back to her corner and took up a book with hands that shook a little. The bored girl began to whimper.

"I'll have to drink tea for ever now, or he'll be hurt! Oh, how selfish you are! And so stupid! Buckets and basins and barrels of tea!"

But Dorothy took no heed. This impertinent and perfectly impossible young man had dislocated her outlook with a peremptory suddenness which left her gasping. The old comfortable hedges and shelters seemed blown clean away, leaving her in the midst of dazzling horizons, wide and startling. This young man, with the knowledge of great things in his eyes, demanded unheard-of things. They were to stretch a hand, the nice girls—a comradely, natural, common-sense hand. Oh, it was absurd! What business was it of hers? She had to keep on being a nice girl. And that meant being reserved with strangers, allowing no liberties, encouraging no confidences. What business was it of *hers* if he—— Again her thoughts frayed out. She sat, flushed and angry, tapping her foot on the floor. He was unjust, wickedly unjust, impossible, absurd! Vera strolled back in search of lollies. She was whistling a bugle-call familiar enough throughout New Zealand now. Then she sang the words—

"Cock your eye at the maiden, chuck her under the chin!
Tommy's always a-raidin', *an'* he's certain to win.
He can battle in love or in war;
Mind you do not hit him on the raw,
Else—he'll—show—you—how to go to law!"

Dorothy stamped her foot suddenly.

"Stop that vulgar thing!" she cried.

Vera looked up with black brows lifted and lips pursed. "What a dear old duffer you are!" she said. "Would you rather he went and talked to those creatures in the next carriage?"

"It's no concern of mine what he does."

"He seemed to think it was. Well, pity one can only be decent to strangers when they're sick. But *he* says loneliness is the worst kind of sickness."

She strolled off with the box of chocolates; and Dorothy saw, in the door, the strong young face with the alert eyes and the white teeth laughing in the brown face, and her ignorance and inexperience trembled. In his crude masculine way he and such as he were calling to such as her for friendship and aid—calling to her to assume responsibilities unguessed at, undesired. She was furious and afraid. Did this young man imagine that war was going to mean the readjustment of more than the map of Europe?

"It's no business of mine. A nice girl can't alter things," she said, and dug her little teeth into her lip.

The long, hot afternoon dragged by. Several times the gunner brought tea and fruit, and sent them up by Vera for Dorothy to refuse. But he never came to speak to her himself; and she rose with a savage relief when, through the red sunset, Pahiatua was reached at last, and in a bustle of impedimenta, greetings, and kisses, she and Vera tumbled out on the little bare platform. All around her rose the bush-hills, purpling dark into night. Just across the white street stood the bank—Dorothy's father was bank-manager—with white curtains blowing at the windows of the living-rooms, and lilies in the garden nodding tall white heads. The gunner had disappeared, and Miss Cole's resigned voice floated out through the window.

"He's gone to bring me more tea, or to wire for someone to meet me with it at the next station, I suppose!"

"He's staying here to-night," said Vera. "Got to catch the coach out to Nokomai in the morning. There's only his father there now. His mother died while he was away."

Dorothy made no comment. She did not want to hear of or to see that gunner again. And then, like a sudden tide setting across the platform, everyone began to run toward the train and to cry out. Dorothy turned in time to see the gunner miss his footing at the carriage window and go down on to the rails, as the little tray and the broken cup came spinning to her feet. But she was on her knees beside him even as they lifted him up, ripping away the torn sleeve and pressing her thumbs on the cut artery. And the gathering crowd, knowing of all those Red Cross certificates which bore her name, obeyed as one man when her orders flew. Those orders contained demands for such things as tourniquets and house-doors; and it was not until he lay in the best guest-room at the bank, and the doctor, having made play with splints and other toys, had departed, that the gunner looked up in Dorothy's face.

"I suppose it's tea and cigarettes and motor drives *now*," he said. "You women have a funny sense of logic, you know."

"You mustn't talk. I'll come back," said Dorothy hastily, and ran away, finding herself blushing and dimpling under his eyes.

Vera, lying on the lawn among the roses, giggled when Dorothy came out.

"You've done every mortal thing you said a nice girl never did," she announced. "What a lark! Good old Doll!"

"He was hurt," said Dorothy sharply.

But Vera went on giggling.

"Every single thing!" she chanted, as her sister fled.



A SUMMER EVENING.

BY BIRKET FOSTER.



NOT QUITE WHAT HE MEANT.

SERGEANT (making complaint): You're fond of listenin' to all the rot what's talked in the regiment, says I, so p'r'aps you'll listen to the Colonel, says I.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

THE TIPSTER.

By Donald H. Lewis.

ON my way to the City the other morning I chanced to enter the same compartment as my friend Jimson. He was looking pretty cheerful and very pleased with himself, and was actually indulging in a huge fourpenny cigar (pre-War price three a penny). His face wreathed with smiles as I entered. Had there been an air raid the previous night, I should have had no doubt that his house had had the distinction of enemy aircraft "right straight above." As there had been nothing doing in the air raid line for ten days, I dismissed this as out of the question, and decided to wait until Jimson confided the cause of his apparent self-satisfaction to me.

Jimson is a very great friend of mine. He it was who gave me all the best racing tips, and since I have known him he has put me in the way of a considerable sum of the lucre that is said to be filthy, but is, nevertheless, mighty useful, especially in these hard times of quadrupled prices and increased taxes. One is instinctively drawn towards the man who puts money in one's pocket. It helps to counteract the wife's apparently endless demand for new hats and dresses.

We greeted one another cordially. The vagaries of the War and the weather were duly deplored. Then Jimson led up to his favourite topic.

"Want a good tip?" he queried in a hoarse whisper, leaning forward so that the other occupants of the carriage should not benefit by hearing any exclusive news. Jimson is a man of much reading, and had evidently read, marked, learnt, and inwardly digested one of the many notices which decorate our trains in war-time, entitled "Be on your guard!"

"Finest tip I've ever given you!" he added in a voice like an unsolicited testimonial.

"National War Bonds!" I exclaimed. Undoubtedly the only tip Jimson could give me that could be described as better than those of the past was National War Bonds. I recollected winning handsomely at Alexandra Park and Newmarket several times, thanks to Jimson.

"As a matter of fact, I've already invested——"

"I knew you wouldn't need any advice about National War Bonds," he interrupted, "so I wasn't referring to them."

I hardly knew what to say to this. I wondered what sort of a tip it could be.

"Must be a jolly good tip," I said, hoping

Jimson would offer a little more detail. He has a habit of holding back the essential facts of his conversation till the last.

"Good! Why, man, it's simply tophole!"

I saw it was useless to hope for anything but beating about the bush.

"It's jolly good of you to give me the benefit of your inside knowledge, old man," I purred, "but I really can't afford to risk more than a tenner in these hard times."

"A tenner!" he gasped.

"I'm afraid I can't afford more just now," I pleaded.

"More!" He looked at me reprovingly. "A pound will be the maximum. You may only be able to have ninepennorth!"

I began to think something must have happened to Jimson. We had always conducted our bets upon a sovereign basis, and here he was dealing in pence. I suggested tossing for halfpence.

"I thought you'd consider that magnificent," he replied disappointedly, ignoring my sarcasm.

"Besides," I added, "I wasn't aware there was a race meeting of any importance on for some time."

"Race meeting!" he almost screamed. "Who's talking of race meetings?"

"Why, you are!"

He looked at me as though he had grave doubts as to my sanity.

"You offer me a good tip and——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" He rocked with laughter. His mirth subsided, he leaned forward again. In the merest whisper he gave me the tip. It was, as he said, the best yet.

I gripped his hand firmly.

"You're a brick!" I exclaimed, choking back a sob of gratitude.

Before the train had come to a standstill at the terminus I leapt from the compartment and made a bee-line for the nearest telephone kiosk, and rang up the wife.

"Go down to Grosser's Stores," I said excitedly—"they've got some margarine at last!"

We had bread and margarine for tea that night, instead of dry bread, thanks to Jimson's tip.



THE ART OF DEFINITION.

NEWCOMER (just out): Bin up the line, mate?
THE OTHER (since Mons): Naw! Bin to a blinkin' fancy dress ball up at 'Aig's place!

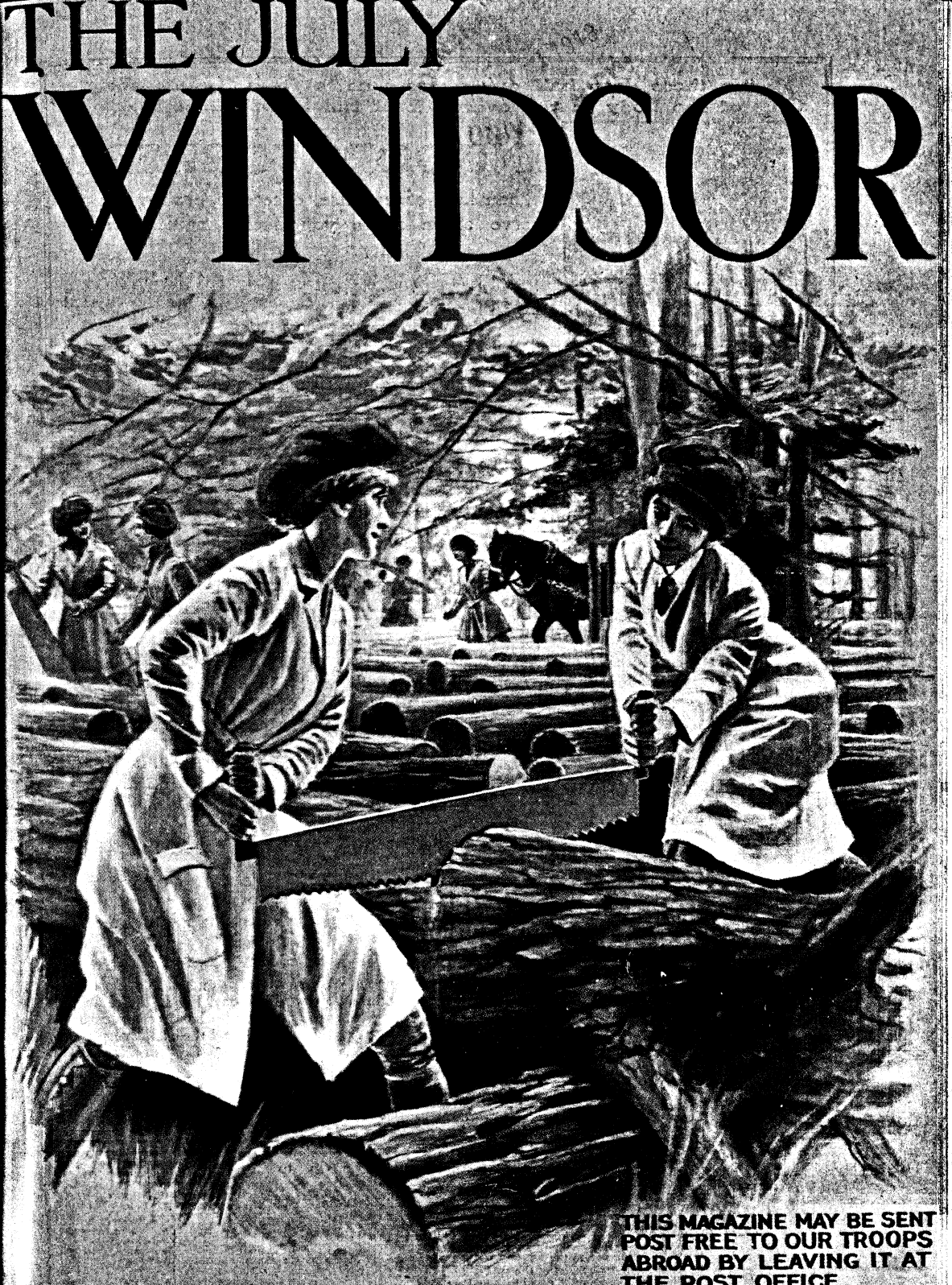
"HELLO, Millett!" called out a neighbour one morning. "I saw you starting away yesterday morning very early, on your fishing trip. Did you have any luck?"

"Great!" was the reply. "While I was away, three tax-collectors called."

SOMEONE asked a successful but modest man what he understood by the term "foresight."

"Foresight," said the modest one, "is that quality whereby we are enabled to blunder into success without looking surprised."

THE JULY WINDSOR



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No 283 ONE SHILLING NET VOL. 48

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although unknown 50 years ago, is one of the most popular throughout the whole world to-day, but at the same time there are still a great many people who have yet to learn that the word is a registered trade-mark and the exclusive property of the Chesebrough Manufacturing Co., of New York, London, Moscow, Montreal, etc.

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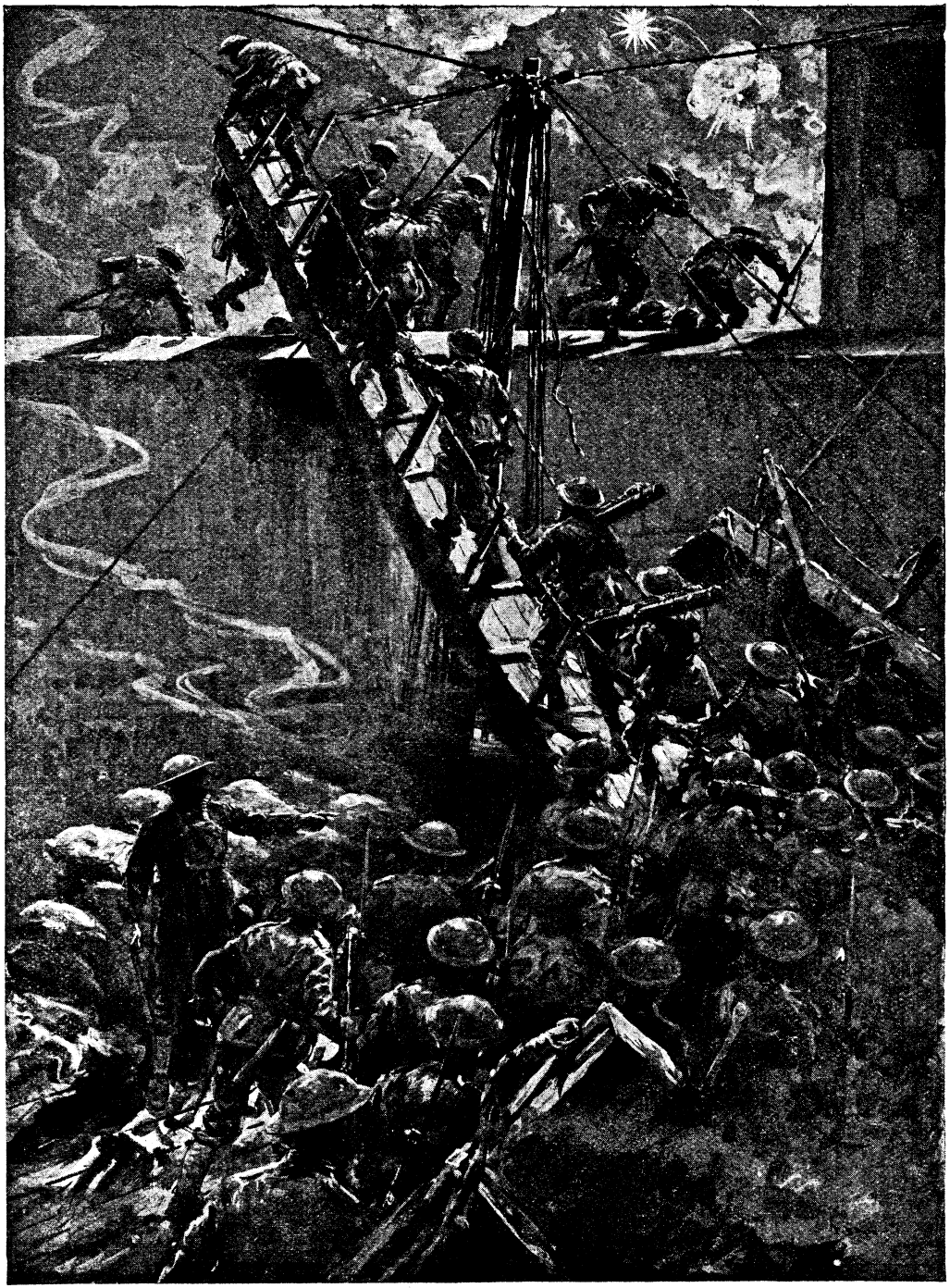


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THE HEROIC STORMING PARTY LANDING FROM H.M.S. "VINDICTIVE" ON THE MOLE AT ZEEBRUGGE.

Drawn by S. Begg, from material supplied by an eye-witness.

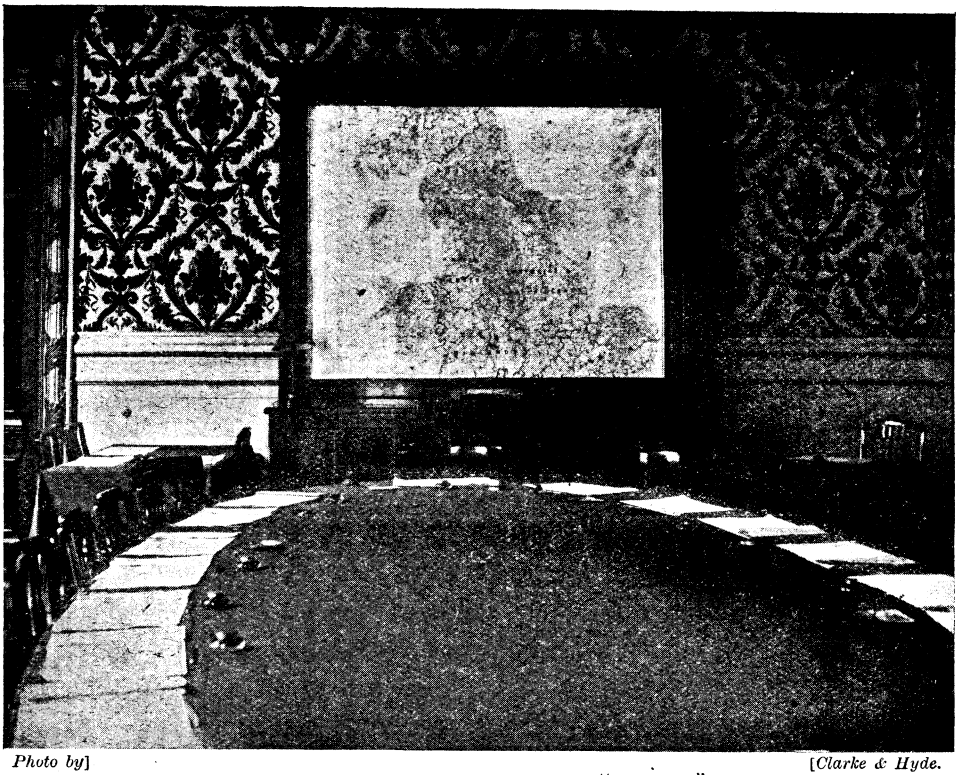


Photo by] [*Clarke & Hyde.*

THE COUNCIL ROOM, WITH MAP OF "REGIONS."

THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SERVICE

ITS ORGANISATION AND WORK

THERE is, somewhere in Westminster, a good-sized room, once a reception room of a fashionable hotel, in which the fate of every man of military age is sooner or later decided. To-day it looks like an ordinary board-room. At the western end of the big oval table is the seat of the Minister of National Service; the other seats of the mighty are for his council. On his right a little table is set apart for the secretaries; on his left is another for the official shorthand writer. Behind the Minister's chair is a contrivance which recalls the diorama of our youth—a big wooden proscenium, in which a large-scale map of the United Kingdom unfolds itself vertically on rollers, operated by an iron wheel, which can bring any recruiting region under the view of the powers in a moment. Thus the Minister and his Council survey their field at a glance, and take the momentous decisions that control the policy of that Ministry which, no less even than the Ministry of Food, concerns and touches every home in these islands to-day.

Here is the centre of a vast and wonderful organisation, a machine which has been evolved by the necessities of the time to meet those necessities and hold a just balance between the needs of the Army in the field and the army of industry at home. It did not grow up in a night. Although the

Ministry as at present constituted is the rapid creation of a single brain, it had forerunners, of which some account must be taken in any historical sketch. These forerunners are not, however, to be regarded exactly as ancestors in a strict evolutionary scheme. For the Ministry of National Service stands by itself among the organisations called into being by the War. It does a new work in a new and original way. That it should have profited to some extent by earlier experiments was inevitable, but the debt to these is not overwhelming, although they provided certain indications of things to be avoided. But with the creation of a separate Ministry the machine indeed, for some time thereafter, it made a gallant struggle to carry on; but the task was beyond the powers of a purely military department. Compulsory service touched civil life at so many vital points that the machine contrived merely for the reception of intending soldiers had become obviously insufficient. If the need to strengthen the Army was great, equally great was the need to maintain the industrial strength of the country. It was with this end in view that there was instituted, in connection with the first National Service Act, the Certified or Reserved Occupations Committee, which drew up a schedule of certified occupations, that reserved for civil life men over certain

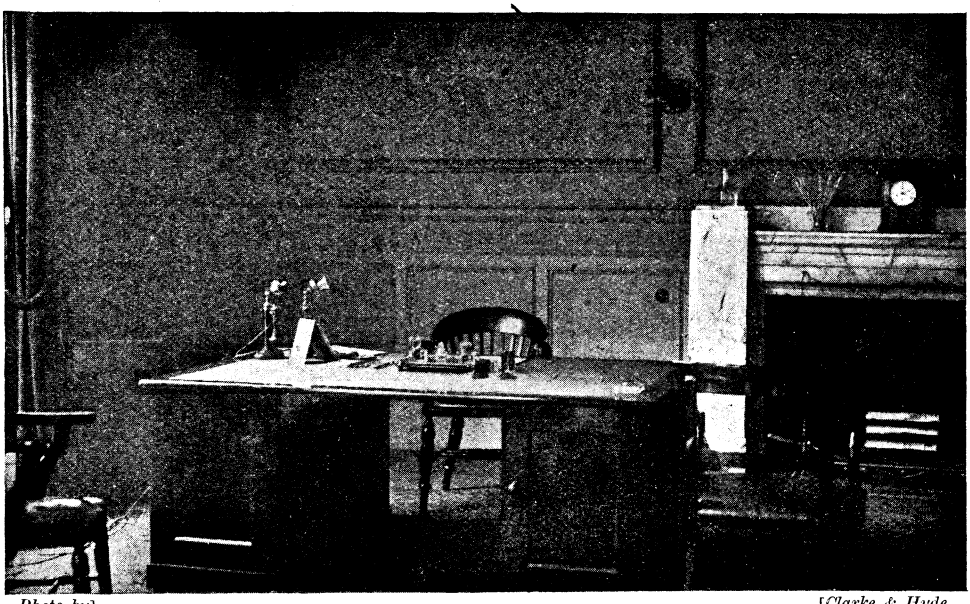


Photo by] [*Clarke & Hyde.*

THE MINISTER'S ROOM.

for regulating National Service became for the first time adequate and efficient. It was a new construction from the foundations, not a reconstruction.

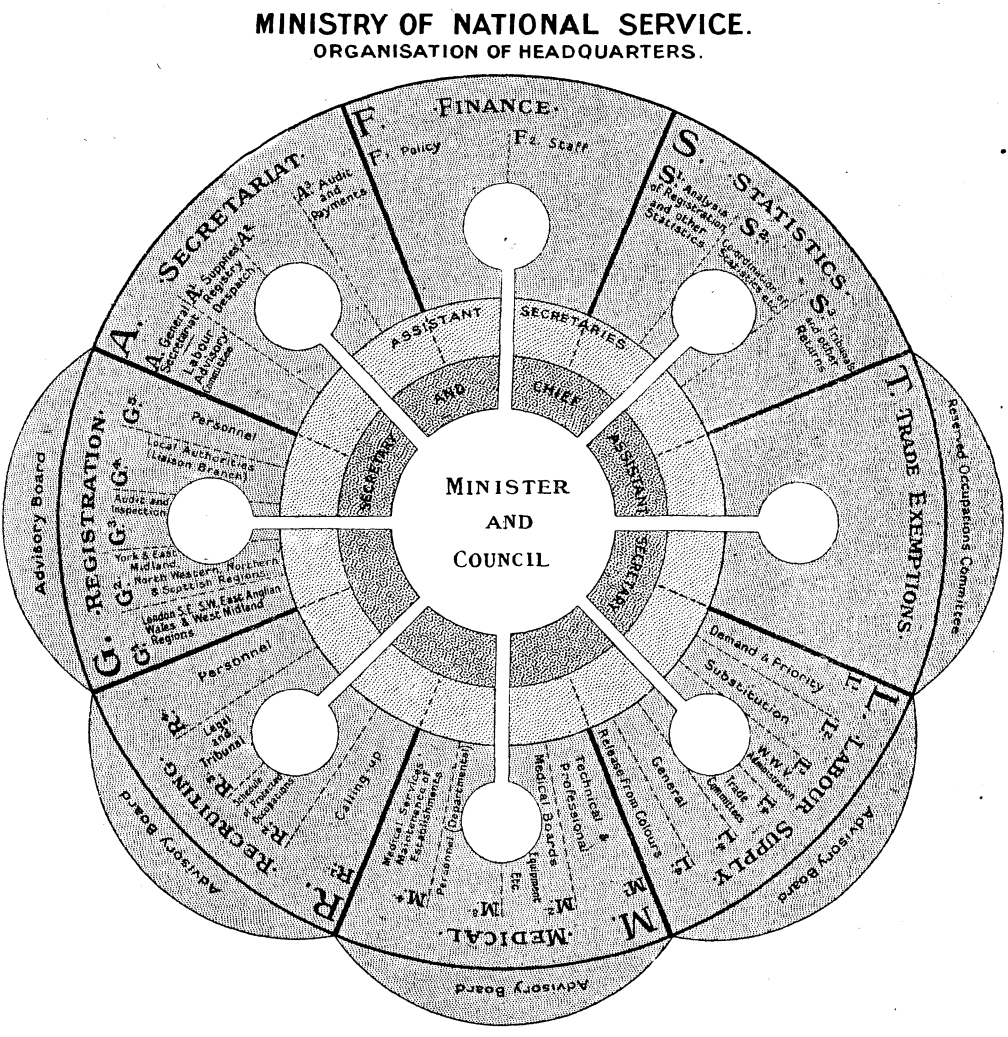
As in so many other respects, the nation surprised by war was found entirely unprepared to handle the problem of man-power. In the earlier days of the War the question was mainly one of recruiting; the larger and far more complex issues had not yet been generally realised. Recruiting was a War Office matter, and the existing machinery for filling up the ranks of the Army was immediately swamped by the rush of men who offered themselves voluntarily for service. The organisation was enlarged, and until compulsory service came, and, ages or of certain medical categories. It was kept constantly under review, and as the demands increased, the schedule had the ages in it raised and the occupations diminished. The Committee, however, made a sustained effort to minimise the withdrawal of men from vital occupations, and to protect industry from the growing demands of the Army.

As the War continued, the recruiting machine felt with increasing severity the strain of new conditions. It was still a War Office branch, with a civil drag upon it. Apart from this it required overhauling. Accordingly, Brigadier-General A. C. Geddes was prevailed upon to come back from France to undertake the work. He put the

War Office recruiting machine into thorough order, and made the system as sound and compact as possible. But various external forces were now tending to divorce the recruiting organisation from the War Department.

Objections to the control which the Army organisation is the Ministry of National Service.

Before Mr. Lloyd George saw that the only way to grapple with the problem of National Service was to create a separate Ministry, the problem had been much before the public. One of Mr. Lloyd George's first



THE GEDDES WHEEL.

Since the design as here reproduced was drawn changes have been made by which more spokes have been put in. There are now nine divisions in all, one being for women.

was acquiring over civil life became too loud to be neglected, and a Select Committee was appointed to inquire into medical examination. The Army Council, with Lord Derby's concurrence, asked to be relieved of the duty, with the result that recruiting was transferred to a civil organisation. This acts, as Prime Minister, had been to review the whole question. The scheme associated with the name St. Ermin's had been inconclusively elaborated. Many things contributed to that lack of finality in the earlier project. The principle underlying the work done at St. Ermin's—where, by the

by, the Ministry is not now housed—enrolled willing persons who desired to be set to work, but the Department's principle, "work for men," proved unworkable. The Ministry, on the other hand, finds "men for work," and keeps the channels of supply flowing smoothly and uniformly in accordance with demand.

To understand how this colossal task is accomplished, one must learn something first of the man who directs the work, and of his system. Sir Auckland Geddes, K.C.B., M.P., was, when the War broke out, Professor of Anatomy in McGill University, Montreal. he was appointed to the Chair of Anatomy in Dublin, and later to the same chair at McGill. So convinced was he that war with Germany must come, that he inserted in his agreement with McGill University a clause providing for his release for military service, should need arise. His foresight left him free to return home and offer his services to his country. He rejoined as major in the Northumberland Fusiliers.

In Canada he had kept his armour bright, and maintained his interest in everything relating to military science. His opening lecture to his students was upon military



Photo by] [*Clarke & Hyde.*

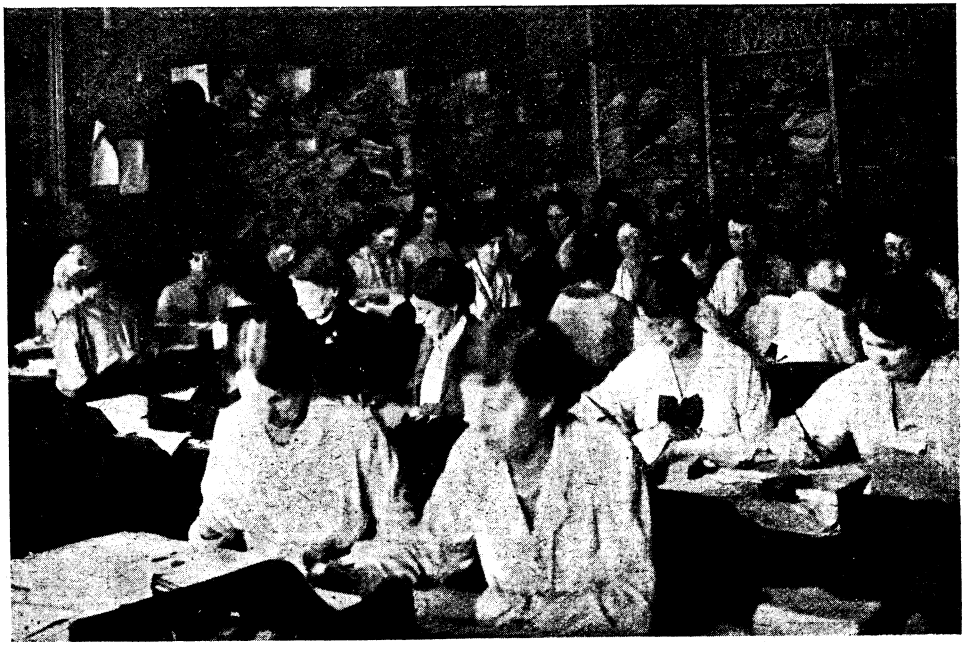
THE CENTRAL REGISTRY, WHERE LETTERS ARE RECEIVED AND SORTED.

But he was a great deal more than an accomplished man of science. In his student days at Edinburgh he was an enthusiastic volunteer in the University Corps. Volunteering was his hobby. He offered himself for active service in South Africa, although heavily handicapped by his eyesight—he has to wear powerful glasses. But he would take no denial. He persevered until at length he was accepted, and went out. When the war ended he resumed his medical studies at Edinburgh, and carried all before him. For a time he acted as assistant to the Professor of Anatomy. He continued his studies in Germany, and came to know the German through and through. Returning, training and physical fitness. He stands six foot, and was a great football player. He founded and trained the McGill University O.T.C. His men called him "The Man with the Whistle." In the present War Sir Auckland Geddes's abilities brought him the rank of Brigadier-General. An unfortunate accident unfitted him for front-line service, but on the Staff he did much valuable work. If the War Office had a particularly knotty problem, the word was: "Send for Geddes." All his training, all his many and diverse interests have combined to make him the man for his present position. The anatomist's habits of minute observation and attention to detail are



WHERE THE LETTERS ARE INDEXED.

invaluable to him to-day; scientific method has taught him that just correlation of particulars which is the strength of the organiser. Rejecting the superfluous, he seizes essentials, co-ordinates them in their proper degree, and the result is a living system. He works quietly. His private room is plain to bareness; in it is only the ordinary Government office furniture. On his desk one seldom sees a paper. The only personal note in his room is significant. It is a map of the Western Front, with the fluctuations from day to day carefully marked in red. Sir Auckland views the situation with a cool and understanding eye. He knows the nation's need and how



WHERE THE LETTERS ARE FILED AND STORED.

Photographs by Clarke & Hyde.

to meet it. He will never be rushed into panic measures.

So much for the man whom the hour has produced; now to consider the system produced by the man.

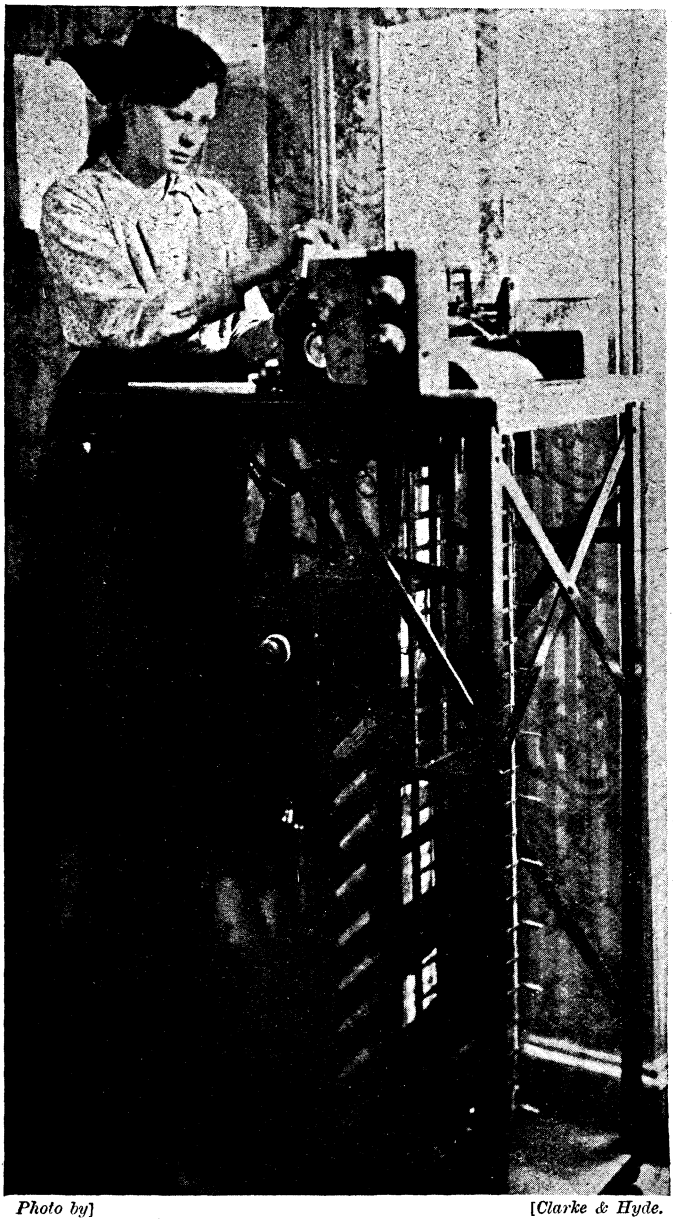


Photo by] [*Clarke & Hyde.*

A MACHINE WHICH SORTS OUT CARDS, SEPARATING MEN OF TWENTY-SEVEN FROM THOSE OF TWENTY-EIGHT, AND SO ON.

The organisation of the Ministry of National Service is, perhaps, best explained to the general reader by the diagram here reproduced. It is the design of the Minister himself; it embodies his conception of his machine. On his appointment he produced it and handed it to his colleagues and subordinates, in order that they might grasp his intention. They call it "Geddes's Wheel." To the Hun it is likely to prove the wheel of Juggernaut.

The hub of the wheel is formed by the Minister and Council, or, more strictly, the Minister is the hub, while the members of the Council—viz., the heads of departments—are the spokes. These spokes, reaching out into departments, symbolise the close and constant personal touch which exists between the Minister and his departmental managers. Next to these are the Secretaries and the Chief Assistant Secretaries, and one remove away come the Assistant Secretaries. Beyond these are the departments, with their subdivisions, and on the periphery lie the Advisory Boards, that for the Trade Exemptions Department being the Reserved Occupations Committee. At that point the new Ministry touches the old scheme.

The nine departments are: Medical, Recruiting, Registration, Secretariat, Finance, Statistics, Trade Exemptions, Labour Supply, and Women.

The Medical Department forms the first point of contact between the Ministry and the great reservoir of man-power supply, and it was to that that Sir Auckland Geddes turned his earliest attention. His first act was to institute the National Service Medical Boards and the Medical Advisory Committee. It has been noted that objections had been raised to the increase of Army control over civil life. With the new departure, which replaced Army by civilian doctors, these objections disappeared, and so well did the new

scheme answer, that compliments took the place of complaints. The method of medical examination was entirely revised, and the eight categories were altered to the four grades. The conflicting claims of the Army and of civil life were happily reconciled by the good fortune which enabled Mr. Lloyd George to appoint as his first Minister of National Service a man who was not only a thorough soldier, but also an eminent medical man.

For the purposes of National Service the United Kingdom is divided into eleven recruiting regions — the London, South-Eastern, South-Western, East Anglian, Wales, West Midland, Yorkshire, East Midland, North-Western, Northern, and Scottish. These regions are divided into areas, and where necessary, in the case of small and much isolated places, the areas have out-stations. These divisions replace the old

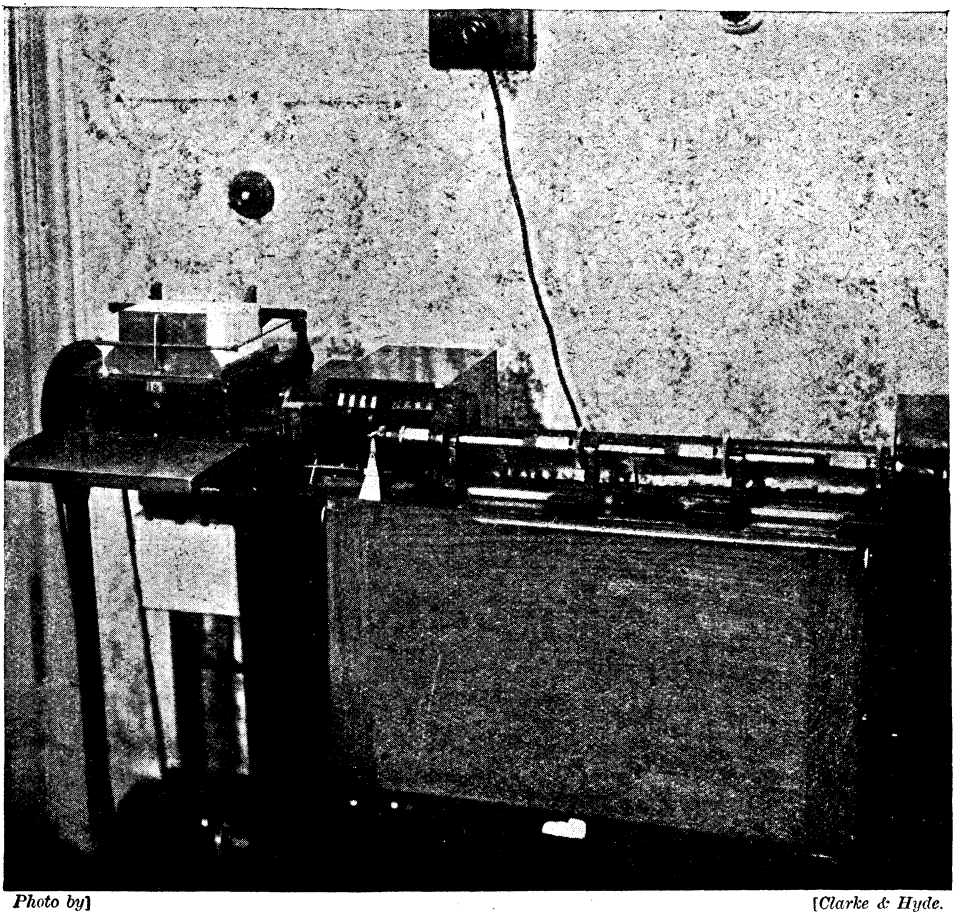


Photo by] [*Clarke & Hyde.*

THE MACHINE WHICH COUNTS THE SORTED CARDS, WITHOUT ANY POSSIBILITY OF MISTAKE.

He understood the needs of the combatant service as well as those of non-combatant service. For the purposes of his new post the Brigadier-General returned to civil life, and he invited many of the former recruiting officers under the War Office to lay aside khaki and come over with him as plain "Misters," to help in the work of the new Ministry. The staff is composed wholly of civilians, and among these can be found no young man who is medically fit for service in the field.

military classification of commands, districts, areas, and sub-areas. In the new scheme the headquarters of a region is some important town, the headquarters of an area usually the county town. This division of the country is set down in detail on the great map in the Council Room, so that the man-power strategists have their field of operations, as it were, constantly before their eyes during their deliberations. It is the symbol of a silent campaign, as vital to victory as that

other carried on across the Channel to the thunder of the guns. The registration in these regions is under the care of the Registration Department.

The reinforcement of the Army in the field is only one part of National Service. Equally important is Department L—that of Labour Supply. The Labour Department is closely linked with the Ministry of Munitions, the Ministry of Labour, the Admiralty, and the Board of Trade. One section of this Department deals with demand and priority, and here the Ministry's system of priorities comes into action. Applicants for men are asked what they are doing, and have to make good their case. They are served in strict accordance with their needs at the moment, and all applications are considered and granted in terms of their relative urgency. Here



THE MINISTER, SIR AUCKLAND GEDDES, K.C.B., M.P., AT WORK WITH THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTRY, MR. CECIL BECK, M.P.

the Ministry solves one of its most delicate problems of balance. Another section has charge of substitution, and others deal with general questions of employment, release from the colours, women's work, and so on. The flow of men is not wholly outward. There is a steady stream of soldiers returning from combatant service to the industries for which they are fitted. Some of these men are incapacitated for further fighting, but quite able for work at home. Others are of low medical category, and more usefully employed in some auxiliary service. Large numbers of these have been released by the Ministry for farm work, and it has thus been possible to crop a vast acreage hitherto under pasture. The Ministry also supplies labour to shipyards short of men; it has drawn to this work miners who were found to be working on short time. Special arrangements are made with trade unions, and their existing machinery is utilised. The Ministry has also instituted the system of bulk transfer in particular trades—that is to say, instead of supplying driblets of men, it arranges, where necessary, for the removal of men from one centre of employment to another. It



BOXES OF CARDS REPRESENTING 1,000,000 MEN OF MILITARY AGE.

encourages War-work volunteers, to whom it offers fair rates of pay, and sends them to shipyards and other places where men are urgently required. The Employment Exchanges of the Ministry of Labour act as collecting stations, which are laid under contribution as occasion may direct. Nothing is done at haphazard. All parts of National

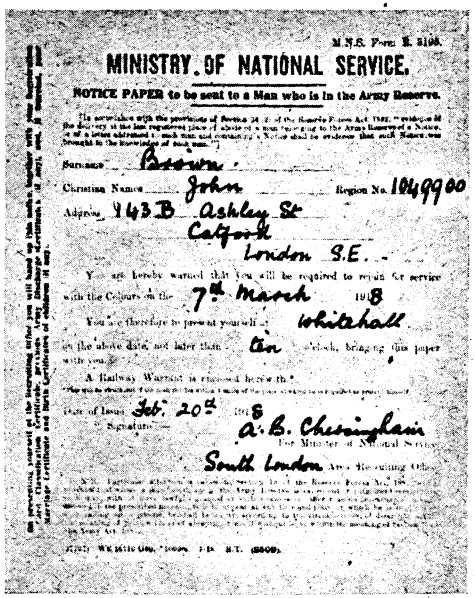


A FILE OF DOCUMENTS RELATING TO EVERY MAN—ALL MEDICAL HISTORY SHEETS, FORMS, ETC.

Service are considered with reference to the whole. The Geddes method may be summed up on three counts:—

1. Make sure of the demand—that is, ascertain its urgency.
2. Make sure of the supply.
3. See that the machinery is in working order.

Very important and interesting, but too confidential to be minutely described or revealed to the eye of the outsider, is the Statistical Department—the custodian of facts and figures. It can produce at call the most precise information. Suppose that the Minister desired to know at any given moment the exact number of men, say, of twenty-seven years of age, not yet called up. The Statistical Department would respond at the shortest notice with an accurate account. To do this, it does not scorn the aid of mechanics. It employs a calculating machine, into which registration cards are thrown. The intelligent contrivance is set to record the men of twenty-seven, and of these alone, in the present instance, will it take account. In a few minutes it has cast up the total. The secret is simple. Every class of cards has its distinctive perforations. The machine rejects all except those presently in question. That this should be at all possible requires, however, the most careful preparation, the most constant watchfulness and co-operation on the part of both the Statistical and Registration Departments, which must note and record every fluctuation from day to day. It reminds one of that most ingenious branch of the Netherlands Civil Service, the Waterstaat, which controls the canals, and can at any given moment tell the depth of water at any specified point. A French writer has called the Waterstaat *une étude de géographie humaine.* The phrase applies with, perhaps, greater aptness to the Statistical Department of the Ministry of National Service. It might even be extended to the whole work of the Ministry itself. For what is it but a study of human geography? It knows from day to day what men the Army has, what men it may have, and what men it has who are not of much use. The Ministry is a compact and deftly articulated whole. All its parts are interdependent, and between them the closest touch is maintained. But it is at the same time more highly decentralised than any other Service. The organisation here outlined does not end with Headquarters. All administrative work is done in the country. Headquarters is concerned with policy alone. "Geddes's Wheel" has its replica in every regional headquarters of National Service. The subordinate organisations are exactly similar in construction and method. For the maintaining of touch, a *précis* of correspondence and decisions is circulated from day to day. Region reports to region, and regions to Headquarters. For the further information of the staff, the Ministry publishes its own weekly newspaper, *The Bulletin of the Ministry of National Service,*



M.N.S. Form E. 2106.

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SERVICE.

NOTICE PAPER to be sent to a Man who is in the Army Reserve.

Surname Brown.
Christian Names John Region No. 1049900
Address 143B Ashley St
Catford
London S.E.

You are hereby warned that you will be required to report for service with the Colours on the 7th March 1918
You are therefore to present yourself at Whitehall
on the above date, not later than ten o'clock, bringing this paper with you.
A Railway Warrant is enclosed herewith.
Date of Issue Feb. 20th 1918
Signature A. B. Cunningham
For Minister of National Service
South London Area Recruiting Office

A CALLING-UP NOTICE.



Photo by] [*Bassano.*

SIR AUCKLAND GEDDES, K.C.B., M.P.,
Minister of National Service,

a creation of the Publicity Branch. The decentralisation has meant an enormous economy; in correspondence alone its work has been revolutionary. Inquiries addressed to any centre are now answered without tedious reference from branch to branch, or from branch to Headquarters. Reference is everywhere direct and by the shortest possible route, both up and down. No department is without its advisory body. That, as we have noted, is on the periphery of the wheel,

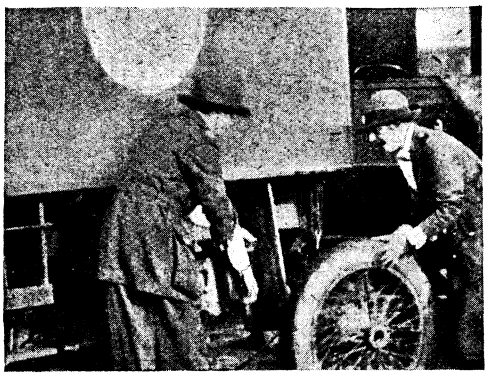


PART-TIME WORKERS ON THE LAND AT ILFORD, ESSEX.

This work is organised by a local Part-Time Committee set up under the Ministry of National Service, and committees are being formed all over the country.

but there is only one link between it and the hub. This is made clear on the diagram. The advisory body reports to the head of the Department, the head to the Minister and Council. The Ministry of National Service is the very negation of the Circumlocution Office.

It is also human and humane. The raising of the military age, with its consequent increased menace to "labour and the changing mart and all the framework of



WOMEN MOTOR DRIVERS PUTTING ON A NEW WHEEL.



RECRUITS MARCHING OFF TO JOIN THE ARMY.

the land," has produced problems calling for the utmost skill, judgment, and tact. Of these a soulless machine would make shipwreck. But the Ministry is not soulless. It concerns itself with minute personal details, which are allowed full weight in determining individual cases. For example, there might be two men, one older and one younger, whose calling-up is under review. On a cast-iron system obviously the younger would go first. But the Ministry considers the circumstances of each. The younger may have greater responsibilities of family



WOMEN MOTOR DRIVERS SIGNING ON.

or business, or his occupation may be of greater importance to the State than his military service. These and kindred considerations are the factors that will determine which man is to be removed from civil life, and when. It may seem impossible that a Government office, dealing with the nation's manhood *en masse*, could take cognisance of such fine points. But this the Ministry of National Service, having organised itself for the study of human geography, is prepared to do. Here lies the vindication of its civilian character, and here also is the

guarantee that while the urgent needs of the Army will be fully met, the industrial life of the nation will be guarded and maintained at its highest efficiency. There is even a probability, amounting almost to a certainty, that the work of the Ministry, which is to put every man in his right place, and avoid all waste and superfluity, will heighten the efficiency both of the Army in the field and the army of industry at home. It will be a bad day for the Hun when "Geddes's Wheel" comes full circle.

It goes without saying that the Ministry of National Service accomplishes its work only by the perfect co-ordination of its parts and the efficiency of every detail down to the very humblest. It is a unique product of a unique time—a truly business government department, but not "business" in the limited commercial sense of a familiar party cry. An organisation can be very "business-like" and yet very one-sided. This Ministry is many-sided. It takes cognisance of all the needs of the nation at the present grave hour. It hears the case of the Army with full knowledge and without prejudice. It hears the case of industry with the same informed and open mind. And so with its endless subordinate concerns. The key to the whole is the Minister himself, who is the epitome of his office. He can deal professionally with medical questions and with military questions. As a practised man of affairs he shows equal competence in handling the labour and social problems in which his work abounds. He has amazed employers of labour by the skill with which he has handled deputations. In this he is aided by his remarkable memory. He can listen to a series of cases presented in order, and, without having taken a single note, he begins with the last speaker and replies to all in turn, showing complete command of their arguments and always ready with his answer. He is a mobile force, prepared, on sufficient occasion, to leave Headquarters and make a flying tour of his regional centres. Again it is the direct method, to the great simplification of business, with consequent economy. To learn something of the results already attained would be more than interesting, but the publication of such statistics would not be in the national interest. One day, however, the country will be enabled to judge from facts and figures the extent of its debt to the Ministry of National Service.



WOMEN OF THE W.A.A.C. TENDING THE GRAVES OF OUR FALLEN MEN IN FRANCE.



WOMEN OF THE W.A.A.C. ON THE MARCH IN FRANCE.

THE LITTLE PEOPLE

By EDGAR WALLACE

Illustrated by Maurice Greiffenhagen, A.R.A.

IN a country where gossip runs from village to village as quickly as fire flicks from straw to straw you may maintain a small force of spies, and yet never know of most important events which happen almost at your front door. For, though your native man, and no less your native woman, is a born gossip, there are certain secret things about which he does not talk, and there was a time when half the Akasava were fighting half the Isisi, and no one was the wiser, because both sides had tacitly agreed that the riverain villages, which were directly under the white man's eye, should preserve the semblance of peacefulness, and Akasava and Isisi folk bartered and traded with one another on the beaches, and men went from one country to another in perfect security, though ten miles in the interior the flower of their fighting-men were at death-grips.

Thereafter Mr. Commissioner Sanders was wont to probe into the "bush," sending small parties of Houssas on long journeys into the forest, to test the condition of public sentiment. Further than this, he made it known in grand palaver that the sins of the interior should be visited upon the river villages, and that he would exact reprisals of a peculiarly drastic character whenever these —to the native mind—innocent deceptions were practised.

The natives did not believe him, because they have few theories and no abstract philosophies; but after a few river villages had been burnt, and a few headmen summarily sent to penal servitude, the people of the river changed their views. Nevertheless, this did not put an end to secret fighting, because war is a biological process, which cannot be eradicated by legislation until you eradicate the desire in the savage animal to defend his mate and his young from the attacks of enemies. When men reach a point where they can gaze unmoved upon the danger to their women, they have arrived, not at a high development of civilisation, but are far down the opposite slopes of mental and moral degeneracy.

There were two communities which dwelt upon the B'sumbi River. One of these was of the Akasava, and the other of the Isisi nationality, and theoretically they dwelt together in harmony, though they were far from the great river and the vigilant observation of Mr. Commissioner Sanders.

The chief of the Akasava village, one K'soga, sent secret word to the countryside that the spirit of his father had moved him to hold a grand feast. He sent out gifts of chickens, goats, and dogs to the headmen —this being the form that important invitations take—and on a certain night the countryside gathered in the village and watched the Dance of Young Hearts, performed by forty-two boys.

There is, from the white point of view, something amusing in the spectacle of forty-two sturdy urchins with beards made of red goat hair gummed to their fat little faces, and there is something even admirable in the excellent discipline of the boys as they strut and stamp and sway in line and in circle through this mystic measure.

But after the boys have done their part, there is a great drinking of palm wine and a certain beer which is brewed from maize, and Sanders had placed the ceremony amongst the prohibited festivals. This particular Dance of Boys—each representing an arrogant and masterful familiar of the Akasava nation—lasted for a day and two nights, and on the dawn of the second day K'soga gathered his spears and raided the Isisi village, killed a few men, carried off a few women and many goats, and returned in triumph. His success was made more easy by the fact that the chief and most of the men of the ravished Isisi village were away hunting when the raid occurred.

Two days later K'lavo-bolo, the chief in

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question—well descended from high fighting-men—came southward through the Little-by-the-Big forest where the B'sumbi forest throws out a tangled promontory, and with him came his two own brothers, three other brethren by his father's other wives, and a cousin named M'Kema.

They went at a gentle jog trot along the forest path, in single file, each carrying a wicker shield of great size and significant design, and the arms that were thrust through the wooden brackets of the shields grasped fistfuls of throwing spears.

At the Wishing Water, that green and stagnant pool, the breeding-place of tsetse and gnat, K'lavo-bolo halted to sluice his spears.

"That K'soga of the Akasava may meet us without his brothers, and that he may die swiftly," he prayed; "that Sandi may never hear of K'soga's end; that Militini, the soldier, may sleep and no word come to him; that Tibbetti, the young one, may pass without looking."

His own brother swept the pool's surface with his broad spear.

"That no spy of Sandi shall hear of our great killing, nor carry word to the soldiers; that K'soga's ghost shall not walk in the forest nor frighten us," he said.

Each of the men had his prayer for vengeance and security.

"Let us sleep by the pool," said K'lavo-bolo. "To-morrow our young men will come, and then we shall meet K'soga, for his boys will dance this night, and we shall catch him when he is asleep."

The next morning they were joined by an Isisi fighting regiment, and, descending upon the Akasava, their prayers were more or less answered, for they crucified K'soga before his own hut, drove the women to the forest, and burnt the village.

"Now let us make an end of these boys," said the own brother of K'lavo-bolo, "for they will carry stories to Sandi, and he will come with his soldiers."

K'lavo-bolo looked at the ludicrous little group of children who were huddled together in the midst of his warriors, and shook his head.

"If Sandi comes," he said, "he will not hang us for what we did in hot war. If we kill these children, I think we shall hang. Let us drive them into the B'sumbi, where they will all die, and then we can tell Sandi that we have not seen them."

So some thirty-eight small boys—four had made their escape—with tear-stained faces and red goat beards, were marched out of the village, and the great forest swallowed them up.

* * * * *

Captain Hamilton, of the Houssas, came swinging across the parade-ground, and Bones, who saw the vicious way his superior was twirling his cane, felt a sudden sinking of heart, and hastily reviewed his delinquencies.

Suddenly he remembered.

He had forgotten to mail the monthly pay-roll—in duplicate—to divisional head-quarters.

"Oh, lor!" said Bones dismally.

He stood rigidly to attention and saluted with great humility as Hamilton took the steps to the stoep in one leap.

"Hello, Bones!"

Hamilton turned upon his lieutenant with an unpleasant glitter in his eye.

"Hello, and good mornin'," replied Bones rapidly. "Everythin' correct an' no jolly old defaulters. Moral of troops excellent an' health of the army good."

"Hello, Bones!" repeated Hamilton softly, and his stick whirled more furiously than ever. "I want to see you about something."

"Certainly, Captain Hamilton, sir," said Bones, with badly-simulated surprise, "though what on earth it can be about—— I've had several bouts of fever lately, an' my poor old head isn't all it might be——"

"Do you, by any chance," interrupted Hamilton, with sinister deliberation, "contribute character sketches of your superiors to *The Brading County Star?*"

A great light dawned upon Bones.

"Did they put it in, dear old Ham?" he demanded eagerly.

Captain Hamilton drew from his pocket a newspaper and glanced at the column which it was folded to expose.

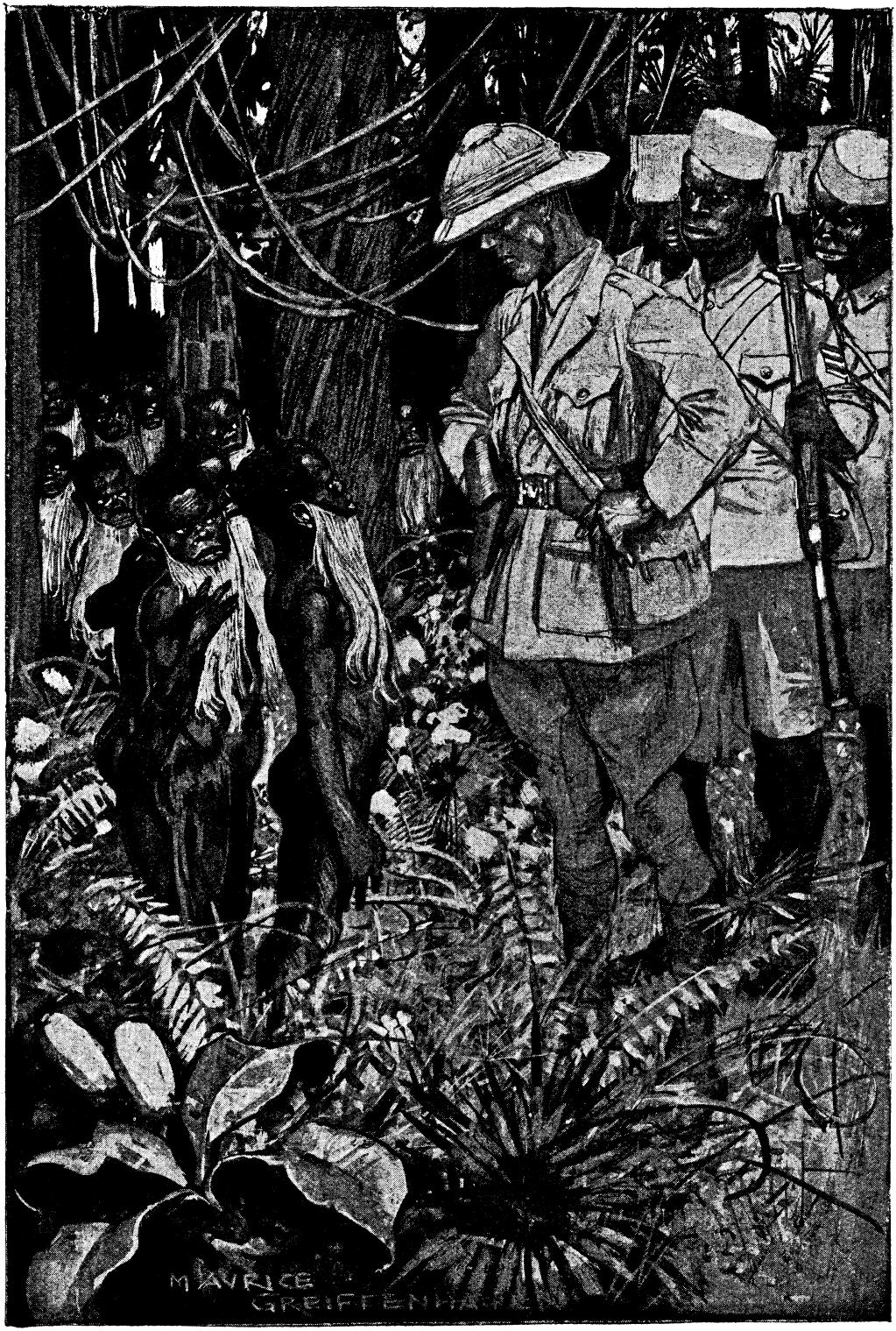
"There is an article here," he said with studied calm, "entitled 'Types I Have Met.—No. 2. The Martinet, by Senob.'"

"That's 'Bones' spelt backward," the young man explained complacently.

"Any ass can see it is 'Bones' spelt backward," snarled Hamilton. "What I want to know is, did you describe me as a middle-aged man of irascible temper?"

"Did," stammered Bones guiltily—"now, *did* I, dear old officer?"

"And again," continued his remorseless chief, reading, "'The tropical heat early saps the vitality of men whose lives have not been all they might have been. Alas!



"Bones, coming suddenly upon a silent watching circle, stood still and gaped."

Drink! How many a promising career hast thou blighted!'"

Bones made no reply. He stared round-eyed at the top of Hamilton's left ear, and sniffed.

"Did you write that?" demanded the wrathful Captain.

"It was purely—allegorical," said Bones incoherently, "intended, dear old officer, to point a moral and adorn a tale—nothing further from my thoughts—don't misunderstand me, sir an' commander."

He gulped, saluted, and hurried from the scene.

"I'd have kicked him, for tuppence," said Hamilton, describing the interview.

Mr. Commissioner Sanders smiled.

"That was Number Two. Did you see Number One?" he asked drily.

"Good Heavens, no! Who was the subject—not me as well?"

Sanders shook his head.

"I was the victim," he said. "Bones described the Territory fairly well, but went on to prove that what was needed was young blood."

"Well, I'm——"

Sanders laughed, which was a rare occurrence.

"Young people should not be allowed to handle dynamite or fountain pens," he said. "Yet *scribimus indocti doctique!* When I was new to this strange continent, I wrote voluminously. Novelty of surrounding and an ardent temperament have produced more literature than any of the vital phenomena of life. There never was a tourist who went to Switzerland who did not describe his emotions at the sight of Pilatus."

Patricia Hamilton came later to tiffin, and noted the absence of Bones.

"In disgrace?" she said, in surprise. "What has Bones done?"

"He has adopted a literary career," said Sanders, "and has faithfully described your brother. Show your sister the paper, Hamilton."

The girl read the offending article, punctuating her reading with delighted little gurgles of merriment.

"Poor Bones!" she said, wiping her eyes. "You aren't really cross, are you, dear? And it is all so beautifully spelt."

"I was a little annoyed," admitted Hamilton, "and my annoyance was aggravated by the discovery that the silly jack—the stupid fellow had forgotten to forward the pay-roll to H.Q."

He chuckled.

"I'll bet the printer had a bad quarter of an hour with Bones's spelling!" he said.

The object of his scorn was at that moment sitting on the edge of his bed, leaning forward with clasped hands between his knees, a picture of dejection.

"Sir," urged his factotum, "consumption of food necessary for subject. Unless subject revitalises tissues by administration of proteids to stomach, subject suffers in cranium from feverish symptoms."

Not in vain had Ali Abid served as assistant to an eccentric bacteriologist who had made his home and pursued his studies of tropical diseases at Grand Bassam.

"Don't talk about food, dear old Ali," said Bones testily. "This is a case where a gentleman either chucks the Service or shoots himself. What's that?"

He sniffed the pleasant fluid in the bowl which Ali held.

"The juice from a young he-chicken enveloped in boiling water flavourably enhanced with onions," said Ali alarmingly, but with detail.

"I'll try to pick a bit," said the melancholy Bones, with remarkable briskness, "an' whilst I'm doin' it, put out my writin'-case."

He "picked a bit" to such purpose that Ali was a thoughtful man when he brought the last plate to the Houssa orderly to be washed.

"Truly Tibbetti is the son of a wolf and the great-grandson of a vulture," he said bitterly, "for he hath left me a skeleton and a scent!"

Bones squared himself before his writing-table, and made four ineffectual starts at his letter.

Spelling was not his strong point, for he had been on the mathematical side at school, and had never understood why words should not be written as near phonetically as possible.

"SIR (began the letter)

"I have the honour to submitt for your favrable attention, for your favrable attention, my resignation from the Army, the Army. I feel that, under the circumstances, I can do no less than ask you to forward the same to the proper quaters. Dear sir and friend (of other, other days), believe me I am sorry that I wrote in the beastly paper in a wild moment, in a misguided moment. I did not describe you—that was far from my thaughts, far from my thaughts. It was rather a *melanje* (mix-up) of various fellows I had met. The male leaves leaves on Tuesday, and I shall begin

packing at onse. My sorrowful regards to your sister and respectful salaams to our dear old Sanders.

"Yours ever,
"BONES,
"Augustus Tibbetts, Lieut.

"P.S.—Ali makes simply ripping chicken soop soop; you aught to get Abiboo to take a few lessuns.—B."

Hamilton received the letter with the afternoon cup of tea that woke him from his doze. He finished his tea and went across to interview his subordinate. He could hear Bones singing long before he reached the hut. It was a song sung in a cracked falsetto, and Bones, who was not quite sure of the words, and was ignorant of the time, filled up the deficiencies as he went along.

"Oh, ma honey!
Ain't it fun-ny?
Di diddle dumpty doo de di de day!
When we meet in Tennessee—
Oh, tumpty tumpty tee!—
We'll be so happy all the day——"

The song broke off suddenly, and when Hamilton knocked at the door, it was a weak voice that bade him enter.

Bones was sitting limply on his bed in his shirt-sleeves, his banjo thrust hastily under the pillow, and artlessly, but only partially, covered by a large bath towel. He rose feebly to his feet and saluted.

"Not feeling well, Bones?" asked Hamilton, with spurious sympathy.

"Touch of fever, sir," said Bones, in a hollow voice. "Afraid I've been overdoing it. Six months in England will pull me round. Then I must find some sort of job to occupy my mind."

"Why not go on to the staff of *The Brading County Star?*" suggested Hamilton blandly.

Bones made a deprecating gesture and shook his melancholy head.

"I deserve it, dear old sir. Rub it in," he said brokenly, "hit a fellow when he's down! Have no mercy on the jolly old blighter!

Rattle old Bones
Over the stones,
Diddly, diddly, diddly Jones!"

Hamilton did not reply, but after a while he said—

"I had your letter."

"Ah, yes."

Bones shrugged his shoulders with the most despairing shrug he could muster at short notice.

"There's nothing else for me to do, dear old Captain. I had to send in my resignation or shoot myself, an' I don't want to use Government ammunition on a purely private job. That wouldn't be honest, dear old sportsman."

"Yes, I have had your resignation," said Hamilton, "and I have decided to accept it."

All the weariness, all the dejection and the gentle unhappiness with which Bones was clothed fell from him like a cloak, and he stood bolt upright.

"You have accepted my resignation, jolly old friend?" he said incredulously.

He looked at his superior with a searching eye.

"Dear old Captain," he said gently, "you are not well. You've been standing in the sun."

He took the wrist of his indignant superior in his hand and began counting rapidly.

"One, two, three, four, five, six—temperature up, pulse racing like a jolly old paddle-wheel, eye bilious. Off you go to bed, my pallid old sir. Bones will look after you."

So confident was his tone that Hamilton was almost deceived.

"What the dickens do you mean?" he demanded, and felt his own wrist. "There's nothing wrong with my pulse."

"Patient suffers from illusions," murmured Bones, "hears strange singing noises in his jolly old nut. Very bad, very bad, old officer! You go right to bed."

Hamilton recovered himself.

"I think this arises out of the fact that I have said I will accept your resignation," he began.

"Sit down on the bed, dear old Captain Hamilton," soothed Bones, patting his commander's hand. "You're all right—feelin' better? Shall I sing you to sleep?"

"No!" said Hamilton hastily. Then: "Seriously, Bones, you'll have to give up writing to the papers. In the first place, it is against King's Regulations, and, in the second place, it makes your pals look silly. You're in the Army to fight, not to write——"

Sergeant Abiboo stood in the doorway of the hut, his hand raised rigidly to the salute.

"Lord," he said, in the Arabic of the Coast, "it is the order of Sandi that your high lordships shall go to him, for the *chika chik* has brought a great message."

Hamilton hurried out of the hut instanter, for a telegraphic message from Administrative Headquarters was an event, and

portended big happenings. Before he had reached the verandah, Bones was hopping and skipping in his wake, buttoning his tunic as he ran, and bawling for him to "slow down."

Sanders sat in his big cane chair, two telegram forms, closely filled with the crabbed writing of the operator, upon his knees, and these he was regarding with a scowl.

"Anything wrong, sir?" asked Hamilton.

Sanders made a wry little face.

"Headquarters have opened an ethnological branch," he said drily.

He looked up.

"What do you know of the B'sumbi?"

It was Hamilton's turn to frown. He knew the B'sumbi forest, but as to what lay within its depths, neither he nor any man who had lived in the Territories could say for certain. It was less of a forest than a swamp, or, rather, it was a series of islands, peninsulas, and isthmuses connecting lands thickly covered with virgin forests and separated by marshes, which were infinitely more difficult to negotiate than open water.

A few intrepid travellers, Sanders included, had penetrated into the B'sumbi, but had done no more. The frontier line between the Territories and a certain friendly Power ran somewhere through the forest in a straight line. In theory that line was definite. In practice neither the Government of the Territories nor the Government of its friendly neighbour could actually say whether this or that village was on one side of the line or the other.

The forest had never been surveyed. It was extremely difficult to take any kind of observation, and in places—particularly in the more dense forests of the Inner B'sumbi—impossible.

"I know as much as most people," replied Hamilton slowly. "It is a filthy country, full of wild people."

"Have you ever heard of the Negrito?" asked Sanders, and Hamilton shook his head.

"Negrito, dear old Excellency," began Bones, bursting into the conversation like a whirlwind, "the jolly little Negrito! I have shot hundreds of them, dear old sportsman. Funny little thing, like a squirrel—very good eatin', if you know how to cook 'em."

"The Negrito," said Sanders calmly, "is a race of dwarf negroes who inhabit certain parts of the Philippine Islands."

"Ah," said Bones, greatly relieved, "the Negrito! I thought you said the Negreto! Of course, everybody knows the Negrito. He lives in the Philippine Islands, dwelling amongst the swamps and feeding on the herbage——"

"The Negrito," said Sanders patiently, "is a negroid race living in the high mountains of the Philippines."

"Then they are not the kind of Negrito I have met," said Bones, unabashed.

"Just shut up for one moment, Bones," snapped Hamilton.

"Anybody knows where the Negrito come from," murmured Bones gently.

"They have all the characteristics of the pygmy of the Ituri," Sanders went on, "and the pygmy of the B'sumbi." He tapped the telegram on his knees. "Administration wants somebody to go into B'sumbi and make a report on these people, their customs, and their habits. It sounds a perfectly horrible job, but it has got to be done."

"Perfectly beastly job," said Bones, and looked at Hamilton with a speculative eye. "Well, dear old Ham, when do you start?"

"The only thing," mused Sanders, looking up to the roof of the verandah thoughtfully, "the only thing is that I want to secure a really good report. It must be written by someone who is accustomed to writing—somebody who can reduce to fluent English all he sees and hears."

Bones coughed.

"Naturally," he said.

"It ought to be a man with a style of his own," continued Sanders, "a man respected by the natives, someone quick and alert, and someone who can master the new dialect—which he will have to learn—and someone, moreover, who can inspire confidence in these little people, who are rather shy."

"Why didn't you say 'Bones' at once, sir?" demanded that gentleman. "Of course I'll go!"

"It must be a man with an iron constitution," Sanders went on, "who doesn't know what illness is, a quick observer, a man of resource——"

"You are quite right, sir," interrupted Bones, shaking his head. "Our dear old Ham would never do for this job. I will be ready in ten minutes."

As a matter of fact, it was not until two days later that H.M. Launch *Wiggle* set forth on her adventurous voyage.

In a green dell far in the interior of the B'sumbi forest thirty-eight disconsolate little boys sat in a circle, in the fashion of their fathers, and held a palaver. For more than a week they had lived upon their resources by trapping monkeys and by the digging of edible roots.

They had held many palavers, but this was the most serious of all, because their bush instinct told them that they were nearing a wholly unfriendly people. It was a cheerless assembly, since none saw reason for merriment in the fact that each of the dancers had industriously regummed his goat-hair beard to his face. Since each was the representative for the time being of a domestic devil of great potency, it was necessary for their salvation that their parts should be maintained.

One, Titu, who had suggested that the facial adornments should be removed, had been met with such a volley of scorn that he had almost wilted from the circle.

"Titu is a fish," piped a small boy insultingly, "for, whilst we are devils, no other ghost will attack us."

"But the B'sumbi people are not devils," protested Titu feebly, "and they will chop us."

"Wa!" said the chorus with such unanimity and alacrity that it was easy to understand what was uppermost in each small mind.

Buku, the boy who had assumed leadership, shook his head.

"We shall frighten them with our terrible faces," he said confidently.

One of the circle jumped up, a terrified expression on his face.

"I hear!" he whispered agitatedly.

They were all on their knees, their ears to the ground. There was no mistaking the continuous pad, pad of bare feet. But the difficulty was to know from what direction the sounds came.

The boy Titu suddenly jerked himself erect.

"There is a wooden foot,"* he said. "Perhaps it is Sandi."

They listened again in complete silence. The trained ears of the boys easily detected the sound of shod feet. It must be a white man, for no other wore boots in the forest.

"If it is Sandi, he will beat us, because the Dance of the Boys is against the law; and if we tell him everything, then he will beat our fathers, and they will beat us. Now, I shall not speak when Sandi comes."

Titu had stolen from the group and had moved rapidly, but noiselessly, along the forest track in the direction of the sound. It was he who first sighted Bones at the head of his carriers, and passed the word to the conspirators.

Bones, coming suddenly upon a silent watching circle, stood still and gaped.

* * * * *

The complaint that Sanders made about Bones's report was that three-quarters of it was devoted to a description of the incidents of a perfectly commonplace journey, for the adventurer had insisted upon recording everything that had happened to himself, irrespective of its intrinsic importance or its bearing upon his quest. After wading through sheet after sheet in Bones's vile fist—containing such thrilling items as "11.27, bitten by large fly on rist; applied first-aid by sucking, cotton-wool, iodin, etc."—Sanders at last reached that portion of the report which Bones had been sent to make. He had described his meeting in the forest, sixty miles farther west than he had expected to come upon any trace of the people he had been sent to study, and went on—

"The pygmy of the B'sumbi is, in my well-considered judgment, judgment, a pure Negrito type. His average height is three foot seven, and he wears a long red beard (detachable). Very intellygent, but dumm, but dumm, crys when smacked, but very fond of sugar. Eats cake from hand, but very taim, but very taim, taim. Also playfull."

There were many other characteristics which Bones mentioned in the course of his report, but none which so excited the curiosity of Sanders as—

"Unlike other natives of Territory, they accepted all gifts reddily except sope."

In a far-away Akasava village Buku narrated to his admiring relatives, such as had survived the great raid, the story of his adventures.

"As for Tibbetti," he said grandly, "he gave us many wonderful things which were good for the stomach, and these I ate, also my friends. But this one cruel thing he did, that he made us wash ourselves with a certain white stone which made the eyes very painful; but, *baba*, though he told us many times to do the thing, we would never wash our necks, for the water made us feel unhappy."

Boys of all races and colours have much in common.

* A shod foot—i.e., a man in boots.

A further story in this series will appear in the next number.

COMPANIONED

By EDITH DART

OVER this quiet countryside,
Where hill and valley, rock and tor
In immemorial peace abide,
Hovers a sense unknown of yore;

Come sounds of feet that used to tread
Hill track and moor path, field and lane;
The fall of Devon speech, low said,
Drawling, familiar, soft refrain.

As high we climb, where, one dim blue,
The distant landscape quivers far
To the sky's melting, changing hue,
Sudden companioned we are:

As though this stretch of country wide,
Misty horizon, land between,
The river's rapid flowing tide,
With other eyes than ours were seen—

The eyes of men afar who turn
Over the world, across the foam,
To the old land; with passion yearn
For sight and sound once more of home.

PIERRETTE AND THE PROBLEM

By PAULA HUDD

Illustrated by Howard Van Dusen

THIS is not exactly a story, for it really begins where the printer would probably put "The End," and it will never finish until such time as the snowdrop and the crocus forget to come back in the Spring.

But we must needs call it a story, for what name can you give to the two notes of music that float to your ears as a door swings open in a quiet, dark street? What name can you give to that fragrant minute of time that is yours as you pass a flower-seller on a refuge in a busy thoroughfare? It is only Imagination, the magician, coming soft-footed behind you, who can make of the two notes a song, and of that fragrant minute a lifetime of Spring days.

* * * * *

Pierrette—powder, patches, pom-poms, and all—stood on the threshold of a prosperous-looking City office, in an extremely draughty corridor, and rapped lightly on the door with her knuckles. A depressed masculine voice called "Come in!" and Pierrette slipped round the door on tip-toe.

She clicked her little black satin heels smartly together, and stood dimpling delightfully over her black ruffle.

The man sitting at the table stared, got slowly to his feet, then sat down again.

"Er—good morning!" he said uncertainly.

"Good morning, Moneygrub!" retorted Pierrette.

The man pulled some papers towards him and took up his pen.

"I'm afraid I'm rather busy this morning," he murmured. "Perhaps another day——"

Pierrette came forward and, sitting on his table, faced him defiantly, swinging her slim, black legs.

"There is only to-day where I come from," she answered—"to-day, and a beautiful world to spend it in! I've come to discuss problems. Have you got any problems to be discussed, Moneygrub?"

The man shook his head,

"No; and, anyway, I've really got no time——"

"But what's the good of not having problems if you haven't got any time to enjoy not having problems? You're illogical, Moneygrub!"

She jumped down and, crossing to the window, flung it open.

"It's April," she cried, with a song in her voice, "and down in the street there's an old, old woman selling young, young violets. I think you could smell them, Moneygrub, if you sniffed very hard."

She stood leaning against the window frame, a slim, black silhouette, and a gleam of interest shot into the man's glance before he bent his eyes to his papers again.

"I really must ask you——" he began, and put his hand on the telephone.

"Not a teeny, weeny problem?" queried Pierrette. "I'm out this morning to clear up all the problems that ever were by discussing them as uncommonsensely as possible. You've got the blues badly. There must be a problem behind them. Tell me!"

The Moneygrub got to his feet and, thrusting his hands into his pockets, started walking up and down.

"Well, perhaps there is something," he admitted. "I—I had a sort of polite quarrel with the wife this morning, and—well, it was a bad start for the day."

Pierrette stood very still, and, when she spoke, the song in her voice had sunk to a crooning whisper.

"Was it—was it her fault or yours?" she queried.

The man shrugged his shoulders.

"Perhaps mine, perhaps nobody's. You see, the cook has left, and the housemaid



"'There is only to-day where I come from.'"

hasn't turned up from her holiday, and the charlady forgot to come and oblige this morning. The wife wanted to go out, and there was all the work to do. And I said she could surely get things straight in an hour, and then go out." He scratched his head thoughtfully. "It seemed to be the wrong thing to say. Anyway, she snapped at me, and I snapped back, and bundled out of the house. And there it is."

Pierrette pulled a stool forward and perched herself on it.

"It's an old problem, that," she said slowly. "It came along with houses and things, and the etiquette fiend. Tell me, have you got a big house, Moneygrub?"

"M'yes, fairly big. Pater left it to me, and it seemed a sin not to live in it."

Pierrette nodded.

"And was it furnished?" she queried.

"Chock-full! Lovely old things, some of them, but we don't use half the rooms, you know."

"And the 'lovely old things'—what are they, Moneygrub?"

He sat down wearily and folded his arms on the desk.

"Oh, antiques, you know, and silver things, and some solid old furniture."

Pierrette twisted on her stool.

"But—but they aren't *lovely* things. They belong to the things that don't really matter. I believe"—her voice sank to a hushed whisper—"I believe they are household gods. Do you suppose you're a heathen, Moneygrub?" she queried anxiously.

He shook his head.

"I don't know, but I shouldn't be surprised," he answered. "Anyway, there's the problem."

Pierrette knitted her brows and gazed out of the window.

"Has it ever occurred to you what a lot of money people spend on paste and polishes and powder and utensils for keeping clean things they never use?" she asked irrelevantly.

The man pondered for a moment.

"I hadn't thought of it before," he answered.

"And what a lot of time and energy they waste keeping up an ugly world for the benefit of other people, instead of making a new beautiful one for their own benefit?"

She jumped down from the stool and, coming over to him, perched herself on the table at his side. Her face was suddenly very eager.

"Oh, listen, Moneygrub!" she cried. "I've got a beautiful idea for you and your wife! You shall get rid of the servants and the big, old house, where Love must always be losing his way. You shall stop being heathens and worshipping false gods, and you shall have a little, tiny place, where nothing will have to be done except just what makes for happiness and comfort. And you must learn to understand what things really matter. Your wife mustn't live her life to impress her next-door neighbour—she must live it for you. And you mustn't expend all the best of yourself in making an income to keep up a big, old house for other people to admire. You must leave time for remembering what size your wife takes in gloves."

She paused a moment, and the man put in a gentle "Yes?" of encouragement.

"And visitors mustn't be asked in just so that you can show off your possessions. They must want to come in simply because nothing in your home makes them envious or discontented, because they can be sure of finding there the things that really matter."

There was a great light in the man's face. "And what are the things that really matter?" he asked.

Pierrette grew very still. Up from the street came the hoarse voice of a great city, and, like a minor accompaniment, the cry of the old, old woman selling young, young violets.

"The things that matter are these," said Pierrette—"the sun and the flowers and the west wind, the smile that warms and the laugh that heals, and the mind that finds truth and beauty because it never looks for anything else—and, above all, the love"—her voice shook a little, but she faced him bravely, with a flushed face and eyes full of wonderful dreams—"and, above all, the love that brings perfect understanding."

There was silence in the office for a while. Then suddenly the man's hand closed over hers.

"I'll do it," he said, on a note of deep happiness. "We'll begin again—that way."

Pierrette slipped to the floor and, going behind him, put her arms round his neck.

"Oh, I'm glad I came up to the photographer's, after all," she murmured happily, "and I'm glad that you play games so beautifully, but I'm most glad of all that I married you, my old Moneygrub!"

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE

By L. G. MOBERLY

Illustrated by Frank Gillett

ONCE upon a time, presumably, the drive had been smooth and well kept, but now it was no better than a country lane, and a lane torn up into ruts and holes and gaping fissures, its smoothness a thing of the past. Once upon a time, too, the shrubberies on either side had been trim and tidy; but now they, too, were unkempt and neglected, and, worse than that, the very shrubs had been rooted up and tossed aside with horrid savagery, and the gardens beyond them reduced to a state of chaos.

Tony Brereton's soul grew hot with anger when he saw the wanton destruction of what must once have been a cared-for and beautiful garden, and his language respecting Boches was neither very complimentary nor very measured, as he pointed out the wreck of a garden to his brother-officers. They were all making their way together to the château at the end of the drive, their orders having been short and clear.

"Château Trilloy is unoccupied," so the young men were told; "the inhabitants fled when the Boches advanced. Make yourselves as comfortable there as you can, and put your men into the outbuildings and kitchens. Take care that nothing is damaged."

"Nothing much left to damage!" Tony remarked, with a snort of anger, as they emerged from the drive and saw the château itself in front of them. "Those absolute blighters seem to have smashed every window, as well as turning the garden into a wilderness."

The level rays of the setting sun shone upon the grey façade of the building, and twinkled back from the broken glass in the windows, revealing some of the damage that had been done by a brutal soldiery; and as the little body of English entered the open door of the building, evidences of that reckless brutality struck their eyes at every turn. Valuable furniture lying in broken confusion, carpets and curtains slashed to ribbons, pieces of priceless china strewing stairs and floors—indescribable and profitless destruction—these were what Tony Brereton and his companions saw around them on their first entrance into the Château Trilloy.

"Fair pigsty they've made of this place, sir," the sergeant said, looking about him with blazing eyes. "Makes me sick to see all them beautiful and valuable things chored up, as you might say, all for nothing but nasty spite. Who's the better for all this shocking smashing up? That's what I should like to know."

"A good many of us would like to know the same," Tony answered grimly, and his mouth set in a hard, determined line. "Perhaps we shall teach them what we think of them before we've done. A cultivated, civilised nation indeed!" And Tony snorted again. The deserted place would make comfortable enough billets for him and his fellows—there was no doubt of that—and the men would be housed no less comfortably in the great kitchens and storerooms on the ground floor. It was only a matter of getting things into a more or less shipshape condition; and, at any rate, this big, substantial house was infinitely preferable to dug-outs or huts. True, the furniture had, for the most part, been wrecked—wrecked beyond all hope of repair—but the walls were thick and the roof sound, and there was wood enough in the great gardens to enable them to make good fires in the great fireplaces. Some of the mattresses were not entirely useless, and there were blankets and hangings which needed washing, certainly, but when once cleansed they could be used as coverlets.

"Sickening shame to have torn down

these jolly things to use as counterpanes," Tony said to the others, pointing to a gorgeous piece of embossed velvet tossed across a broken chair. "Makes you feel—well, I don't quite know what it does make me feel," he ended, no words being adequate to express his outraged feelings. "Make yourselves as comfortable as you can," Tony added, glancing round the group of junior officers. "The sergeant has gone off to forage, and we'll mess in whichever of these spacious apartments can be cleaned up quickest. See about getting things straight down here." They were standing in a big drawing-room, and Tony's eyes wandered to the vista of rooms opening from it to right and left. "I'll just go upstairs and find out how much accommodation there is up there. The Old 'Un wants to know." The nickname belonged to Tony's colonel, in whom his irreverent juniors professed to see a striking likeness to Mrs. Gummidge; and with this remark Tony left the room and found his way to the great staircase which went up from the central hall, dividing right and left on the landing above.

"Plenty of room in this establishment," the young man reflected, as he went through the long passages and glanced into rooms on either side—deserted, ransacked rooms like all the others they had seen. "We can get no end more chaps into this place if—— By Jove, that's queer!" His reflections broke into this ejaculation, when at the end of the passage he found his further progress barred by a locked door. "Seems to be the door into a turret," he muttered. "But why locked? That's the point—why locked? Did the inhabitants put their treasures into the turret, and the Huns fail to find it, or what?"

He stood for a moment contemplating the locked door, feeling that his explanation of it was quite an unlikely one, seeing that Huns were not in the habit of overlooking possible plunder; and finally he tried the handle again, shook it vigorously, and at last, being little more than a boy, in spite of his captaincy and his many responsibilities, he drew out a strong knife and proceeded to force the lock, chuckling with boyish pleasure when he had achieved his purpose. The door creaked back upon its hinges, and he found himself, as he had expected, in the turret at one end of the château. A narrow staircase wound downwards, another upwards, and on his left was a door ajar. He pushed it open, whistling a soft, pleased whistle as he did so; but his whistling stopped suddenly, and his hand went up to the salute, and he waited on the threshold, confronting a tall old lady who stood in the centre of the room.

It was a very small place with a great many small windows, that was Tony's first confused thought, and he was vaguely aware that the furniture was heterogeneous and piled up in an odd muddle; but his eyes came back to the old lady, drawn by some strange fascination, and his hand remained at the salute. She was very tall, dressed in black, with something black resting upon the snowy whiteness of her hair, and she looked at the intruder with a certain proud disdain, through which Tony fancied he detected something of shrinking and fear.

"Pardon," he said in his best French, which was very quaint French indeed, and spoken with a broad English accent, "je crains que je suis—que je suis trop—dans votre route"—he had not the ghost of an idea how to translate into French "in your way"—"mais nous sommes—billeted here, you know," he ended desperately.

"You are English." She spoke in his own tongue, slowly and with difficulty, but his face cleared.

"Yes, we're English," he said, "and I'm most awfully sorry we've disturbed you. We were told the château was empty. Are you living here? Is it your own house?"

The lady in black looked, as she felt, profoundly puzzled. She could only understand a word here and there of Tony's rapid speech, and she was quite incapable of answering him at any length in his own tongue.

"Your château?" Tony said interrogatively and rather loudly, waving his arm to include the landscape generally. "Yours?"

"C'est à moi, oui," she answered, "mais—les Allemands——" And the shrinking fear he had divined in her face became very real. It looked out of her eyes, and he saw that she was shaking, in spite of her stately carriage and the proud lift of her head.

"I say, it's all right, Madame," Tony exclaimed hurriedly. "We are not bally Huns, we're English—Allies," he added, repeating the words with loudness and clearness, "Allies!"

"Oui." Her face grew a shade less anxious. "Mais les soldats sont les soldats, et j'ai vu des choses si terribles—j'ai entendu des choses——" She broke off with a shiver, and for a moment covered her face with her hand. Tony could no more follow her rapid French than she could follow his

rapid English; but her gestures were comprehensible, and he was repeating earnestly, "I say, it's all right; you take my word, you'll be as right as rain here with us," when a look of startled dismay and a quick exclamation from his companion made him turn sharply in the direction towards which she was looking—to the winding upward stair behind him. Perhaps because he was so absorbed in his efforts to make himself understood, he had heard no sound of a footfall, but a girl stood just at the foot of the stairs—a girl at sight of whom Tony drew in his breath with a quick little gasp. She was very young and very fair, with blue eyes which made him think, in an inconsequent way, of the forget-me-nots that grew in the water meadows near his home. She was very simply dressed in rough, coarse clothes such as peasants wear, but no roughness of clothing could hide her refined loveliness. She came into the room with a little deprecating smile, and put her hand upon the old lady's arm.

"I could not help coming," she said in fluent English, with a pretty broken accent. "I heard this gentleman speak, and I knew you and he were not very well understanding one another."

"We don't seem able to understand one another at all," Tony said, with a rueful smile. "I dare say my French is a bit weird."

"Why did you come down?" the old lady was saying quickly in French to the new arrival. "You might have stayed safely in the room above, and now—who knows?" And again a little shiver ran through her frame. The words were so much Greek to Tony, but the gesture again explained itself.

"I say," he said earnestly to the girl, whose eyes met his with innocent frankness, "do tell Madame there's nothing to be afraid of. I expect she has heard a lot of horrors, but tell her we're *English*, and we don't go about hurting women." There was a certain scornful pride in his tone, and the girl put out her hands to him with an impulsive movement.

"I know, I know!" she exclaimed. "When we saw from the window of the turret that men in brown were coming up to the château, I said to Grandmère: 'They are English—all is well.' But she would not believe—she could not believe. She has seen and heard too much." And a great gravity swept over the girlish face.

"Je crois bien que les officiers sont bons—mais les soldats!" It was the older woman's voice which spoke, and the girl translated for the benefit of the puzzled Tony.

"Good Heavens, she doesn't suppose our chaps would hurt her or you, does she?" he asked, a smile breaking over his face. "Tell her they'll jolly well be proud to take care of you both. I say, did you come back here and hide after the Boches were gone?" he added, with boyish curiosity. She nodded, but, though she tried to smile, her face grew very white.

"We had to fly, Grandmère and I," she said, her voice rather shaky, "and we were in the woods first, and then in little villages—here—there—wherever we could go. Ah, do not let me speak of it! And then we came back here, to Grandmère's beautiful home, which they have spoiled; and when they told us soldiers were coming, Grandmère said we must hide in the turret."

"Well, you needn't do that any more." Tony smiled his pleasant smile, which gave such attractiveness to his fair, clean-shaven face. "My chaps shall rig up some rooms for you and Madame, and we'll make you as comfortable as we can. But the Boches have made hay of your house, and we can't undo in a hurry what they have done."

"C'est la guerre," the girl answered simply; "and if we may stay in a corner of the house, quietly, without hindering you and your men, la Grandmère and I will be very thankful, very glad."

Whilst the two talked, the old lady, who had remained standing, very erect and still, in the middle of the room, watched their faces with intent scrutiny. Tony's boyish, open countenance, his honest eyes, his frank smile, had somewhat mitigated her first alarms, and she felt more confidence now in this boy who smiled so pleasantly, who looked at her with such clear eyes in which was nothing sinister; and when Tony went away to make such arrangements as were possible for her and her grand-daughter, the old lady was inclined to accept as true the girl's very decided statement: "Avec un monsieur anglais on n'a pas peur."

* * * * *

Probably never in the course of their lives had the two French ladies spent such a unique time as during the fortnight that followed, when, amongst the ruins of their own home, they were tended, guarded, ministered to, by that small band of English officers and men. The men threw themselves with a will into their young Captain's schemes, and every corner of the establishment was ransacked to bring such comforts

as were possible to the rooms which Tony set apart for the owner of the château and Gabrielle, her granddaughter. And although ostensibly the English soldiers were billeted on the castle's inhabitants, in point of fact, the inhabitants were billeted on the soldiers; and the two ladies found themselves waited upon hand and foot by eager and willing men in khaki.

"Grandmère says she never knew soldiers could be like your soldiers," Gabrielle said one evening to Tony, when he and she stood together on the wide terrace that surrounded the château. "Even the biggest and roughest-looking amongst them is kind and gentle. And when he brings in the wood, he goes soft—on tip-toe, you say?—all across the floor, just as if we were asleep. Oh, but they are very dear people, these —Tommies!" And she pronounced the last word, after a momentary hesitation, with such a quaint accent and charming upward glance that Tony's grey eyes expressed the adoration he felt. But he said nothing about that adoration; he only laughed his boyish, spontaneous laugh, and answered gaily—

"Tommy has a way of being gentle and kind to women and children, and that big chap you mentioned has probably never been near ladies like Madame and you before. He wouldn't for the world make a noise in your presence."

"They are very dear people," Gabrielle repeated in her slow, pretty English, "and when they go we shall miss them. We feel so safe now."



"Every corner of the establishment was ransacked to bring

"You'll be safe enough after we are gone," Tony answered. "You are well at the back of our lines now, and the Huns will never see Château Trilloy again." His mouth set sternly.

"Even though we hear so plainly the guns?" she asked, anxiety clouding her eyes as the distant boom, that never ceased, sounded like an undercurrent to their words.

"The guns are miles away. You will be safe enough here even after we have gone. Only I'm afraid you will have some more of us billeted here."

"Why are you afraid?" The soft blue eyes met the adoring grey ones. "If all your Tommies are so good, then there is no need to be afraid." And a smile dimpled the corners of her mouth.

"I'm not afraid about the *Tommies*. They won't do anything but take care of you. But"— he paused, then plunged on boldly—"but it's beastly to think of other officers talking to you here on the terrace, and going to see you and Madame in your sitting-room."

"Oh, but then"—the smile dimpled again; she shot a demure glance at him—"but then that is that you are a—dog, is it you say?—a dog in the manger."

Tony laughed outright. "Yes, I'm a dog in the manger," he said vehemently. "I hate to think of other chaps hanging about you whilst I am over there." And he waved



such comforts as were possible to the rooms which Tony set apart for the owner of the château and Gabrielle, her grand-daughter."

his hand in the direction whence came the sullen boom of the guns.

"You will not go *yet*—over there?" The smile left her face, her eyes grew startled, there was a quiver in her voice. "You are not going away soon?"

"Who knows?" Tony's eyes rested on her face; he seemed to be drinking in its loveliness. "We may go on any day, and then——"

"Then—what shall I do?" She put it very simply, very quietly, and all the archness had left her face. She only looked at him with big, wistful eyes, like an unhappy child; and if Tony had followed his own wishes, he would have stepped across the space that separated them and taken her into his arms out there on the deserted terrace. But Tony was an honourable gentleman, and, according to his code, it would not be fair to make love to a girl just when he was going into the firing-line, from which he might never come back. So he only looked at her with all his heart in his honest eyes, and said very gently—

"There won't be any more danger for you now—you will be perfectly safe here—and some day, when I can get away, perhaps Madame will let me come back to see you again."

Her eyes gave him an eloquent answer, but he straightened himself and squared his shoulders, and his mouth set itself into a firm line, which those who knew Tony well

understood to mean an unalterable determination, and he carried out that honourable determination of his to the letter. He was courteous, gentle, friendly to the girl with the lovely face and wistful eyes, but he never went beyond the boundary line of friendliness. Never again during the remainder of his stay at the château did he look at Gabrielle with that expression which told her so much—never again until the morning when he went away, and then the veil dropped from his eyes once more. As he held her hand in a long, close clasp, his eyes looked deep into hers, and all the love and longing in his heart seemed to look straight into her heart. Somehow in that supreme moment it was impossible to pretend—love was in the blue eyes and in the grey, and Tony carried away with him across the desolated fields of France the memory of those uplifted blue eyes shining with the light of love.

* * * * *

The sunlight streamed through a window that opened wide upon a balcony, and through the open window Tony could hear the soft splash of waves upon the beach. Through the open window, too, when he raised himself upon his couch, he could see the shimmering waters that stretched away to the horizon like a vast silver shield. His view of the shining sea was framed by two tall palms; and a mimosa tree waved its feathery branches in the soft air, and sent great puffs of fragrance to where he lay. It was such an extraordinarily different world from that world of horror and death upon which his eyes had last closed, that he could only lie and look out at it with a dreamy sense of having gone to sleep in hell and awakened in paradise. It was all a long nightmare after he had gone "over the top"—the rush across broken, rugged ground, the moment of agonising pain, the black, whirling darkness of unconsciousness which in itself was a cycle of pain. And now, after an intermediate time when a quiet voice had seemed to say with unvarying persistency, "Drink this, Captain Brereton," now he was lying here, revelling in the sweetness of the mimosa and orange blossoms in the garden below, looking at the radiant sunlight of the South, listening to the soothing murmur of the sea.

But as he became more and more alive again to all his new soothing surroundings, memory slowly reawakened, and his thoughts travelled back to the time before those nightmare days in the trenches, and the horror of great darkness that had dropped over him after he went "over the top." England and the old life there seemed very remote and far-away, but the weeks he had spent in the Château Trilloy spread themselves out before him in strangely vivid pictures, and Gabrielle's face, which had eluded him through that awful time of pain and horror, crept back into his reawakened consciousness. Always in those hideous nightmares with which the darkness had been filled he had longed to find Gabrielle. Always she had been just out of his reach, the fair face with its crown of golden hair just beyond his sight. And now—now that he could visualise her to his heart's content; now that he could be here in the sunshine, with the soft murmur of the sea in his ears, and allow his thoughts to rove at will through the old château and the days he had spent there, a heavy cloud hung over all his thoughts, a cloud he could not drive away. For with awakening consciousness had come the knowledge that he was a maimed man, that for the rest of his life he would be a cripple, all his old strength and vigour gone for ever. And with that knowledge came the certainty that the dreams he had woven round Gabrielle's golden head must for ever remain only dreams. He had dreamt that some day, when the War was over, he would go back to the old château among the woods, and tell Gabrielle all the story of his love and longing—the story his honour had not allowed him to tell her before. But now the story must remain for ever untold. He could not ask her to share the life of a cripple. He must never again walk up the long drive to the château, or stand on its terrace, gazing out over the garden and woodland; he must never again look into Gabrielle's blue eyes, or hear her soft voice. Only one honourable course lay before him. He must write her a little note, telling her of his misfortune, and then he must stiffen his lip and set his teeth, and face the future as the "top" had had to be faced when he "went over." Those thoughts came and went in his brain on that sunshiny afternoon, as he lay watching the shimmering sea; and when presently his door opened softly, he turned with a half-impatient movement. He did not want to be disturbed. He wanted to think things out more thoroughly, and his brain could not think out things quietly unless he was alone—unless——

His thoughts came to an abrupt standstill. As he turned his head, his eyes rested on the

figure which had just come into the room, and he stared at it with a dazed sense that he must still be dreaming. It could not be true that Gabrielle stood in the doorway, Gabrielle with her blue eyes looking wistfully into his, Gabrielle with the sunlight on her hair!

"You!" The one word dropped from his lips, but perhaps his eyes were more eloquent than his lips, for the girl shut the door behind her and came quickly to the side of the couch.

"You are yourself once more?" she said, in hurried, eager tones. "You are better? It is good to see you lying on the sofa here by the window, and to know you are yourself again."

"Did you know—have you known about my being unconscious and—everything?" he said confusedly, bewilderment his main sensation. "How do you come to be here?"

"I came to help," she said in her pretty foreign English. "They said women could help here, where English ladies are helping, too. I came to do—what you call—'my bit.'" Her face dimpled into its old bewitching smile. "And my bit has been to dust the rooms and wash the cups."

"*Dust the rooms!*" Tony tried to raise himself in order to stare at her more easily, but he dropped back with a sharp exclamation of pain, and in an instant she was at his side.

"Dear poor," she said softly, with a quaint twist of the words, "did it hurt? Is it bad?"

"It's—all right," he answered, with a quick indrawing of his breath. "I forgot, and it gave me a twinge. I——" He broke off because for a moment words were impossible, his face grew white with pain, and in that instant of weakness his eyes again told Gabrielle all that he had been mentally vowing his tongue should never say. And that look drew the girl to her knees beside his couch; she put her small hand upon his with a soothing, tender touch, and all her heart shone in her eyes.

"Soon it will be better," she said; "soon, the doctor says, you will be well and able to go away. You must—what is it so funny you say?—'buck up.'" Again the quaint English brought a smile to Tony's face, and the touch of her hand gave him an amazing sense of comfort, even though it set his pulses throbbing a little unduly.

"I'll buck up all right," he answered, with an effort after his old cheery manner, "and I shall go back to—Blighty—back home, and—and turn up the corners of my mouth, and keep on smiling."

Gabrielle's brows wrinkled. These idiomatic remarks went further than her knowledge of English would carry her, but she dimly realised that the patient was in some way trying to encourage himself and her, and she smiled down at him.

"I shall be a cripple for life," he burst out suddenly, "a cripple for the rest of my life! But"—he made a valiant dash for cheerfulness—"I shall come to see your wedding, even if I can't dance at it!"

"My wedding?" The colour ran over her face, her hand that rested on his gave it an involuntary pressure.

"Yes." Tony tried to speak jauntily. "Some day you'll marry a French officer—one who isn't a cripple." For the life of him he could not prevent those last words from slipping out—he was still very weak, and they slipped from him almost unawares. For a moment there was silence in the room, a silence broken only by the long swish of the waves on the beach and the insistent call of a bird down there among the mimosas. Then Gabrielle said hurriedly, under her breath—

"I shall not marry a man who isn't a cripple! I——"

"Well, no man who *was* one would be such a cur as to ask you," Tony broke in vehemently, all the more vehemently because of his weakness and the pulses that throbbed under her touch.

"Wouldn't he?" she answered very gently, and she drew her fingers along the back of his hand, and turned her eyes away from him and out towards the shining sea. "But then—I think—he would be a very silly boy."

"He would be no such thing!" Tony retorted, nearly choking with his vehemence and his longing to fling his arms about the slight form kneeling beside him. "He would be doing the only decent and honourable thing. Do you think any man worth the name would ask a girl to marry him if he was a maimed wreck like me?"

"I don't know anything about men worth the name." Her eyes came back from the sunny sea and rested on his troubled face. "I only know about the girl. If—the girl loved—the man, do you think she would care whether he was a cripple or not? She does not love him for his legs; she loves him for himself. And if"—her voice shook—"if a man went away and left a girl

behind, and said nothing, just because he was a cripple, her heart would break!"

Tony's hand closed over hers.

"I say, you don't mean that really, do you?" he said hoarsely. "You don't think any girl would want to marry a cripple chap like me, excepting out of pity?"

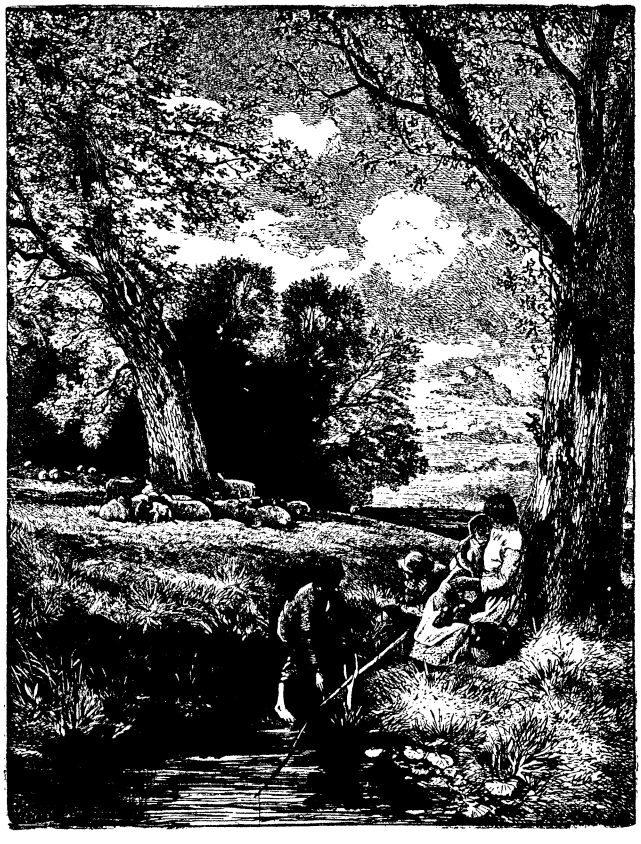
"*Pity?*" Scorn rang in her voice. "I am not talking of pity, but of love—love—love, you silly Mr. Tony; and love"—her voice faltered, then went on bravely—"love breaks the heart when the beloved goes."

"Gabrielle"—Tony's hand drew her nearer—"you can't—you simply can't mean that you—that I—that you could call me——"

"The beloved?" she put in, as he paused, and she broke into a soft laugh. "Oh, most foolish one, you have what the English call the dunderhead; but I think, perhaps—you will take me—with you—to—B-lighty?"

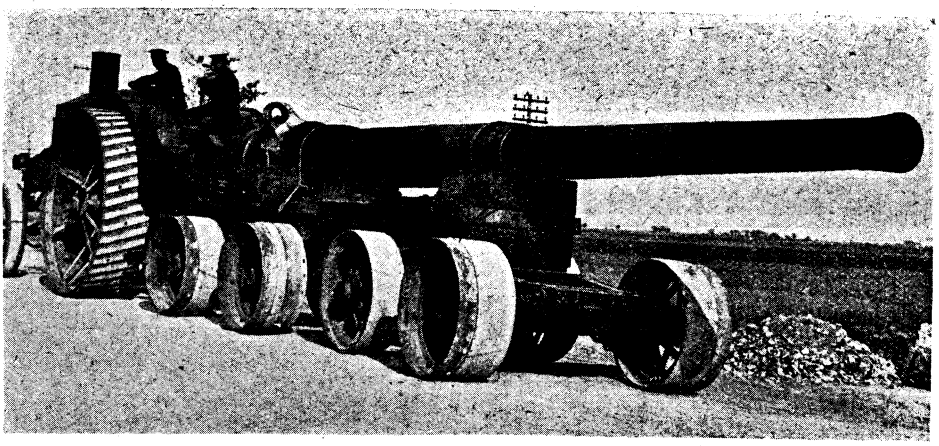
And Tony, though he spent much time in turning his conscience upside down and inside out for Gabrielle's benefit, finally came to the blissful conclusion that perhaps he would.

And—he did!



THE LITTLE ANGLERS.

BY BIRKET FOSTER.



MOVING A LONG-RANGE GUN.

LONG-RANGE ARTILLERY

By MAJOR C. J. C. STREET, R.G.A.

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ALTHOUGH the bombardment of Paris, on March 23, 1918, by a gun some seventy miles away, came as a complete surprise, even to experienced artillerymen, this surprise was rather that the Germans should think such an enterprise worth while than that such a thing was possible.

The event undoubtedly marks an important date in the history of the development of artillery. It has long been realised that the construction of a gun with a maximum range of a hundred miles or more was possible, but up till now no attempt has been made to build such a weapon. We have become so accustomed to guns with a maximum range of twenty miles or so, that the multiplication of this range by three or more seems to postulate some new discovery to account for it. That this is unnecessary will be evident from a short survey of the principles that underlie the design of long-range weapons.

Hitherto, both by land and by sea, the range at which a target can be engaged has been limited by the distance from which the effect of the shooting upon the target can be observed. It is no use firing blindly at a target beyond the limit of vision on the off-chance of hitting it. The development of aircraft has largely extended the limit of vision, especially on land, and with it the effective range of artillery. But in practice it has been found that a maximum range of twenty miles or so is sufficient to enable a gun to deal with all targets that can be accurately ranged upon, even with the assistance of aerial observation.

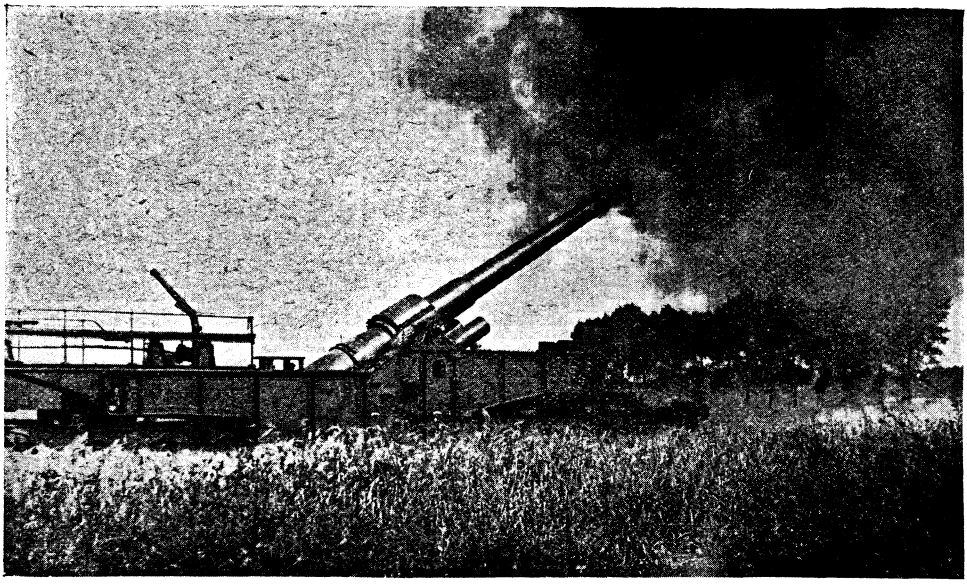
But in the case of a large city, such as Paris, the necessity for observation disappears. The object of the bombardment in such a case is not to hit any definite object, but to damage material and *morale* to the greatest possible extent. All that is required is to drop shell within an area several square miles in extent, a result that can be achieved by calculation, without any observation at all. The question that presents itself to the Germans then becomes: Is it possible to fire shell into Paris from some suitable point well behind the German lines, a range of about seventy miles? The answer to this

question is: Yes, under certain conditions, and if the enterprise is considered worth the labour and expense involved.

The designer of a gun has two main objects in view, of which the first is to increase the weight and explosive power of his shell and the distance it can be thrown, while the second is to decrease the weight of the gun itself. He has, of course, other special factors to consider, but these may be omitted for the sake of simplicity. Now, these two main objects are mutually contradictory, as will be obvious from a short consideration of the methods by which a shell is thrown from a gun.

A gun in its simplest form consists of a tube closed at one end, which end is termed the breech. Into this tube is placed a projectile, with a cartridge containing a charge of explosive—the propellant—behind it. The propellant is ignited, and explodes, producing a volume of gas, the pressure of which drives the projectile down the tube to the open end—the muzzle. As soon as the projectile leaves the muzzle, three principal influences act upon it, namely, its own velocity, tending to drive it through the air; the resistance of the atmosphere, tending to retard its flight; and the force of gravity, tending to draw it down to earth. Of these three influences, the first alone is favourable to its flight; the other two are unfavourable.

The only way to counter the force of gravity is to throw the shell upwards at the beginning of its flight, so as to allow its initial velocity to carry it as far as possible before the force of gravity brings it to earth. Consequently, the maximum range of a gun is attained when it is pointed, or elevated, at about forty-five degrees to the horizontal. The only way to counter the resistance of the air is to allow the projectile to rise to as great a height as possible during its flight, so that during the greater part of its journey it will be travelling through the upper atmosphere, where the air is less dense than at the surface of the earth, and consequently offers less resistance. This, again, is achieved by elevating the gun to about forty-five degrees. For a given initial velocity, therefore, this elevation will give the maximum range.



A LONG-RANGE GUN ON A RAILWAY MOUNTING IN THE ACT OF FIRING.

The only remaining way to increase the maximum range is to increase the initial velocity imparted to the projectile by the propellant. Now, there are two ways of imparting velocity to any body. One is to treat it like a football, and to kick it, so to speak, with a violent impact. The other is to treat it like a cricket ball, and to bowl it by imparting a steadily-increasing velocity, releasing it when that velocity has reached its maximum. In the early days of artillery, guns were made quite short, and employed a propellant that burnt almost instantaneously

when ignited, producing a sudden volume of gas that kicked the projectile from the muzzle.

But with the discovery of the properties of the so-called smokeless powders, such as cordite or ballistite, which are derived from tri-nitro cellulose, or gun-cotton, it was realised that the rate of burning of the propellant could be controlled. A modern gun is of great length; the propellant, when ignited, burns comparatively slowly, producing, instead of a sudden burst of gas, a steady supply, which bowls the projectile the whole way down the bore of the gun, consequently the greater must be the bore of the gun. Also, the heavier the projectile, the greater the charge of propellant required to throw it a given distance. Hence, any increase in the weight of projectile means a proportionate increase in the weight of the gun.

It is a matter of somewhat elaborate calculation to deduce the initial velocity that must be imparted to a shell of a given weight to throw it to a given distance, and this calculation need not be examined. But there is no theoretical reason why a range of five hundred miles should not be attained.



ANOTHER LONG-RANGE GUN FIRING.

imparting energy to it all the way. The result is a great increase of initial velocity for the same charge of propellant.

We can now see how to increase the initial velocity of a gun. We must increase the charge of propellant, and also the time during which the gases act upon the projectile. In other words, we must increase the strength of the gun, to enable it to withstand the increased gas-pressure, and also its length, to enable this pressure to act longer upon the projectile. In other words, we must make the gun heavier.

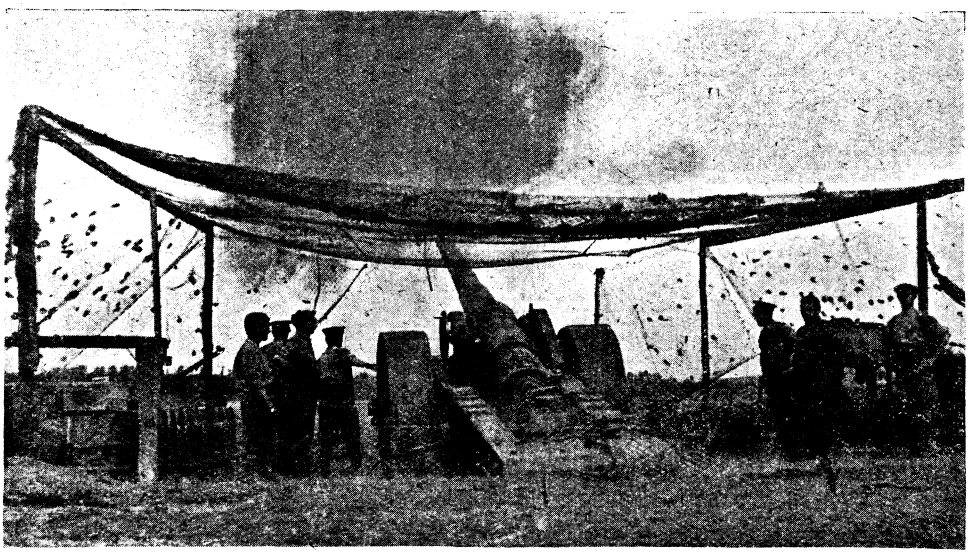
So far, the weight of the projectile has not been considered. Briefly, the heavier the projectile, the larger it will be, and It is only necessary to produce the required initial velocity, and the only practical obstacle in the way of this increase is the enormous weight and length of the gun that would have to be employed. If weight were of no account, if the gun were to be put together at some point and given a permanent elevation and training with a view to firing on one target only, there is no reason why such a gun should not be constructed.

The provision of a carriage for a gun of this size and weight would be a matter of extreme difficulty. A carriage is the mounting in which a gun is held, and which allows of the gun being elevated and trained to various angles. When a gun is fired, the same

energy is transmitted to the gun, tending to drive it backwards, as is transmitted to the projectile, tending to drive it forwards. This energy is known as recoil, and all modern gun-carriages contain a device known as a buffer, which transforms the shock of recoil into a steady stress that acts for an appreciable time. If the shock were to be transmitted directly to the carriage, the latter would very soon be broken or displaced. But with a gun required to shoot at one target only, or, at all events, not required to change rapidly from one target to another, there seems to be no reason for the provision of a carriage at all. The gun might be built as a mere tube, with the breech end butted against a holdfast in the ground, probably at the bottom of a deep pit. Supports of some kind could be provided at intervals up to the muzzle.

The combustion of the propellant produces an enormous volume of gases at a very high temperature. As soon as the projectile leaves the muzzle, these gases are released, and they sweep along the bore of the gun with indescribable velocity. The surface of the steel, already softened by the great heat, is thus subjected to a powerful scouring action, known as erosion, which gradually wears it away. The diameter of the bore is thus gradually increased at each round, until it becomes so much larger than the diameter of the shell that a space, known as windage, is left round the latter as it travels down the bore. As soon as this happens, the useful life of the gun is ended. The range rapidly decreases, owing to loss of gas-pressure round the shell, which also increases the rate of erosion, and the accuracy of the gun falls off, owing to imperfect centring of the shell.

The life of any gun is known by experience, and after firing a certain number of rounds it is removed from service and relined. The frequency with which this must be done increases very rapidly with the initial velocity of the gun, another reason why the range of normal guns is not increased beyond a certain point. Although, in the case of a gun firing at a very large target, loss of range and accuracy could be carried much further than usual, its life would not be more than a few hundred rounds under any circumstances.



A LONG-RANGE GUN ON A ROAD MOUNTING.

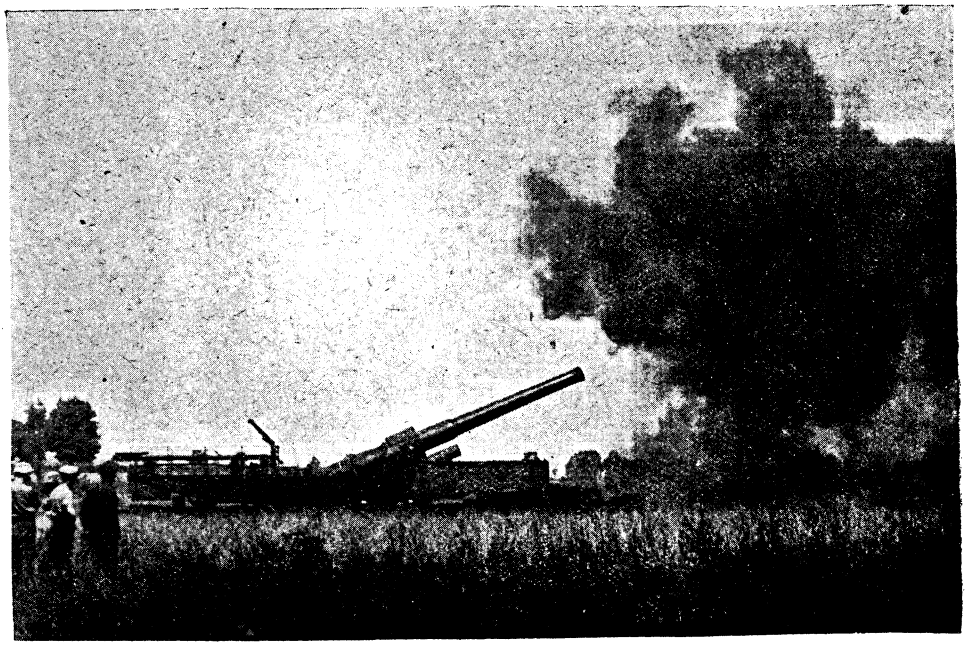
Erosion has a greater effect upon the bore of a gun owing to the fact that the latter is rifled. In order to increase the weight of a projectile that can be thrown from a gun of given calibre, and also to reduce the resistance offered by the air to the flight of that projectile, the latter is made in the form of a cylinder with a tapered head. If a shell of this shape were to be fired from a gun with a smooth bore, it would not travel point first, but would turn over and over in the air, which would then offer great resistance to its passage, and would deflect it from its course, producing great inaccuracy in the shooting. If, however, the shell is given a spin about its axis, it will travel nose first throughout its

trajectory. This spin is imparted by cutting spiral grooves in the bore of the gun, and fitting the shell with a copper driving-band. The driving-band is forced into the grooves of the rifling when the gun is fired, and so the shell is rotated as it passes down the bore. The driving-band also acts as a washer, or gas check, being pressed out by the gases against the sides of the bore, thus preventing the escape of gas round the shell.

It has been reported that the shell that have fallen in Paris have no driving-bands, but have rifling corresponding to that of the gun cut upon them. This system would slightly reduce the internal friction in the gun, which

essential that cover, natural or artificial, should be provided to hide this flash from hostile observation, either from the ground or from the air. Several attempts have been made to incorporate some substance with the charge that would decrease the actinic power of the flash, but without much success. The usual result is to substitute smoke for the brightness of the flash, a distinct disadvantage from the point of view of concealment.

The flash from a superlatively long-range gun would be very difficult to hide, owing to the volume of the burning gases released. It is noticeable that the gun firing on Paris began its operations in the morning, when the



A LONG-RANGE GUN ON A RAILWAY MOUNTING.

would, however, be counterbalanced by the loss of pressure consequent on the impossibility of making the shell an exact fit in the bore. Erosion of the bore would take place very rapidly owing to escape of gas round the shell.

Another effect of the use of a charge of propellant sufficient to give a very high initial velocity would be the production of a vivid flash. One of the greatest difficulties of concealment of a battery in the field is to hide the flash of the guns, not only by night, but even by day. The flash of quite a small gun is plainly visible at several miles distance, even in bright sunlight; at night it lights up the sky like a flash of lightning. It is

sun would be behind it, and therefore in the eyes of observers trying to locate it. It is unlikely that such a gun as this would ever be employed at night, except during foggy weather, owing to the practical certainty of giving away its position. Two observers, some considerable distance apart, would take a bearing to the flash, and these bearings would be plotted on a map. Their intersection would be an accurate indication of the gun's position. Apart from the flash, the noise produced by the discharge of the gun would be considerable. In the light of recent developments in sound-ranging, a fairly accurate forecast of the position of the gun could be given

as a result of observation of this noise alone.

It is possible to imagine the form and the limitations of a gun capable of a maximum range of about eighty miles, and to give approximate particulars of such a weapon. If it were designed to fire at one target continuously, and if it would not be required to change this target very rapidly, it might, as explained above, consist of a tube or barrel only, more or less permanently fixed. In the case of the gun firing on Paris, the diameter of the shell was 240 millimetres, or 9½ inches, approximately, and it weighed about 350 lbs. To throw this shell the required distance, an initial velocity somewhere in the neighbourhood of 5000 feet per second would be required. In other words, the shell would leave the muzzle at a speed of about 3500 miles per hour.

To allow the gases time to act upon the base of the shell, the gun would have to be a very great length—a hundred calibres or more. That is to say that the length of the bore would be a hundred times the diameter of the shell, or 80 feet. This is probably a considerable underestimation of its actual length. Assuming that the average thickness of metal of the gun to withstand the gas-pressure would be about twelve inches—of course, the gun would taper from breech to muzzle, as the pressure falls during the progress of the projectile along the bore—the weight of the gun would be rather more than a ton per foot of its length. Upon a most conservative estimate, therefore, the gun itself, without reckoning its bed or supports, would weigh about a hundred tons. While a gun of this weight can be carried on a battleship with its mounting, it would be extremely difficult to move on land. A suitable carriage, with recoil arrangements and platform, would weigh fully another hundred tons. The probability of a gun of this type being limited to a supported tube built into the ground, without any carriage, is thus strengthened.

The path of the shell leads to very interesting conjectures. Fired at an angle of forty-five degrees or thereabouts, to attain its maximum range, the shell would reach, at the highest point of its flight, an altitude of somewhere between twenty or thirty miles at least, probably more. Here it would be practically unimpeded by the resistance of the air, and even the force of gravity acting upon it would be reduced. The curve of its trajectory would provide the mathematicians of the world with a series of almost insoluble problems before it could be accurately plotted. The time of flight of the shell would be about five minutes at its maximum range.

Such a weapon would suffer from many limitations, which have already been explained, such as unwieldy bulk, restriction to one target, inability to range on that target owing to difficulties of observation and danger of discovery. The only justification for its construction would be its ability to throw a shell weighing three hundred and fifty pounds a distance of some eighty miles. But the shell itself suffers from one important limitation, and that is the amount of high-explosive charge that it could contain. The effect of a shell is measured by the detonation that it produces, and the strength of this detonation depends upon its explosive charge.

Now, the gas-pressure behind the shell in such a gun as has been outlined above would be, at the moment when the gun was fired, about twenty to twenty-five tons per square inch. To resist this pressure, the base of the shell would have to be very thick, and to prevent it telescoping, or "setting-up" in the bore, the walls of the shell would have to be very thick as well. This means that very little space would be left in the shell for a bursting charge, and that consequently it would have a very poor explosive effect. Probably not more than twenty pounds of high-explosive could be packed into the shell, which would thus have a far less destructive effect than any but the lightest bombs carried by aircraft.

Although there is no doubt that superlatively long-range guns of this type will be constructed in the future, and probably their extreme range increased as well, their disadvantages so greatly outweigh their advantages that they will probably only be employed in special cases at certain psychological moments. Indeed, their value is purely a moral one. As instruments of destruction they are much inferior to bombing aeroplanes, their only advantage over the latter lying in their inherent powers of surprise. An impending aeroplane raid can be discovered, and warning given, but there is no means of telling when a long-range gun may open fire.

Whatever accuracy it might be made capable of, the fire of a gun of this type could never be directed upon a definite target, owing to difficulties of observation. Further, unless it were provided with some sort of carriage, alterations in elevation and training would take a long time to effect. The only use to which these weapons seem

likely to be put in the future is to bombard towns lying a long way behind the hostile line, and then more with a view to causing moral effect than material damage. It is possible to imagine a few being installed behind a position, with a view to opening fire upon hostile cities immediately upon a declaration of war. Even in this case, the use of bombing aircraft would seem to be easier and more effective, at all events until the risk of their destruction by improved anti-aircraft defences becomes far greater than it is at present.



A LARGE NAVAL GUN.

From a Canadian War Records photograph issued by Central News.

THE HAYRICK.

GOOD it is to smell the hay
When it's gathered, on a day
Of sunshine sweet and wayward airs
Whispering down the golden stairs
That link the blue so far aloft
To dreaming farm and cosy croft.
Good it is when stacked and neat,
Trimly sliced for cows to eat,
Evening lights about it glance
Warm and mellow, and nimbly dance
Myriad motes of seed and husk
Athwart the beams that stab the dusk.

Good it is to watch the kine
Crunch it, munch it when they dine;
And dream, bewitched by their sweet breath,
That summer has not swooned to death,
Killed by damps and cruel rains
That lash the hills and flood the plains.
And standing there within the stall,
To breathe a prayer for great and small
That He who with the cattle lay,
All among the dry, sweet hay,
Of His dear love will fend from harm
Fold and paddock, field and farm.

R. B. INCE.

DREAM ISLAND

By J. MASON SMITH

Illustrated by Steven Spurrier

DANIEL ALEXANDER ALLENBURY suffered from a superabundance of animal spirits. Needless to say, he kicked over the traces, and he did it pretty often. It was hardly to be expected that his father's patience would last indefinitely. The head of a small but sound City bank has the firm's reputation to consider. Probably the prestige of the business, to which all his life-energies had been devoted, was more to the old man than the hot-headed young cub who had come into his life too late to exercise any tender or softening influences upon it. When he saw his son's name appear discreditably in the newspapers for the second time, he turned the young rascal out, bag and baggage.

Daniel drank himself to sleep in a tavern in the East End that night, and awoke next morning to a splitting headache and the knowledge that he had been a fool. For himself he cared nothing, but there was an unexpected strain of chivalry in his composition that made him care a good deal for Hester's sake.

Impulsive always, he washed and shaved, and went straight to her in the little Essex village where she lived. The story of his disgrace had got there before him, however, and he found her father's door shut firmly in his face.

But he was not to be daunted; he had come to see Hester, and Hester he would see before he went back again.

Towards the end of the day he found her sitting on a fallen log beside the river, surrounded by a meadow of long grass. He took off his hat and flung it from him, then he sat down beside her and took her cold hands in his.

"I'm so sorry, dear," he said simply.

Tears welled up in the young girl's dark eyes, and his own grey ones dropped before them.

"It was a bad day for you when you let me put a ring on your finger, Hester. I've come to take it off."

"No!" she answered quickly, snatching away her hand.

But he was stronger than she, and a fierce little struggle ended in the jewel flashing through the sunlight and dropping with a tiny splash into mid-river.

Hester sobbed, covering her face with her hands.

"One day you'll be glad," he said quietly. "Thank goodness, I've enough sense not to tie you up for life to a good-for-nothing rotter like myself. I don't mean to be wild, but I can't help it. Life's too cramped. Civilisation is too small. I don't think I'd be a bad man if I were not shackled on every hand. But I'm not sure. I'm going away to find out."

She held out her ringless hands towards him.

"Then take me with you, Dan!"

He shook his head, man-like, supposing he was merely punishing himself.

"No, dear," he said. "I've done what I came to do. Now, good-bye."

"And do you suppose," she cried fiercely, "because a ring has been thrown into a river that it will break all ties between us, or make me forget? I tell you I will never forget. Go, if you want to—I will not hold out a finger to keep you—but as long as I live, I will wait for you to come back."

He smiled unbelievingly.

"Good-bye," he said, and held out his hand. As she did not answer or look up, he went away, without hesitation and without looking back.

II.

TEN years passed, and Daniel neither starved nor made his fortune. He learned a lot of things, but not the art of forgetfulness. The vision of Hester, with tears in her eyes, standing amidst the river grass, became an abiding presence—fruit of Tantalus he might never reach; for a world lay between the daughter of his father's partner and the bronzed fisher perched on a coral spur of the Great Barrier Reef.

He was in charge of half a dozen Kanakas and a lugger, fishing for *bêche de mer*. The owner of the lugger paid him five pounds a ton; he himself realised a hundred and fifty pounds. The curing-station was on a spit of low sand on the mainland, a dozen miles away, where the boss and his woman superintended the boiling of the repulsive black slugs Daniel and his divers speared up from the deep.

The man fumed at his pay. The seas swarmed with fish, and it would be no difficult matter to make a small fortune, if he only had enough means to set up a lugger and smoke-house of his own.

He hated the hideous, dirty work he was forced to do. He hated the coarseness of his master and the perpetual association with his illiterate boys.

He had not always been so unsettled. Once, a couple of years back, the lugger had been blown out of her bearings and driven south by the pent-up fury of a cyclone. Superhuman endeavours had succeeded at last in anchoring her safely within the lagoon of one of the many coral islands of the Barrier; and there the cyclone kept them a week, while the world gave them up for dead. That week had shown Daniel that an earthly paradise lay cradled in the bosom of the South Pacific. His soul hankered for the beauty and brilliancy of those four square miles of soil, belted with lagoon and coral. He wanted to grow bananas there—to hack out his own plantation from the virgin jungle, build his own shanty, dream his own dreams beneath the lawyer vines and the notched leaves of the fern of God.

How realise such a scheme on five pounds a ton of slimy *bêche?* Daniel, watching his men dive after the hideous black sea-slugs, knew it was impossible.

And then suddenly Fate smiled on him.

An uproar and hoarse cries from the spit of coral off which the lugger was fishing.

"What's wrong?" he demanded.

Splashings and commotion of the placid waters answered him. A brown arm emerged from the sea, fingers extended. They clutched convulsively and disappeared. One of his Kanaka divers was being mauled by a groper.

A moment later a couple of spear-thrusts ended the short, desperate struggle, and the injured fellow was dragged on deck.

It was a bad case, but Daniel did what he could with amateurish bandages about the head and arms.

The fellow's beady eyes looked up mournfully at him.

"Me go die, Mister?"

"Are you afraid, Pete?"

"I not afraid. Me go die?"

Daniel nodded, for he knew his man.

"Pete not afraid. Him plenty big groper. Him go die also. Him no more catch Kanaka boy."

Sombre lids closed down over the brilliant eyes, and the poor, mangled figure of the diver was still for a time—not for long.

"Mister," whispered a voice perceptibly weaker, "one bery beeg secret. Pete go die. Secret no more good."

There was a silence, in which the dying fellow fought for breath. Daniel lolled idly on the deck, with his back against a barrel. There was nothing more he could do, and he was not particularly interested in the diver's "beeg, beeg secret"; but he did not care to leave the fellow alone in his agony.

"I carn see, Mister! Him plenty dark."

"Yes," agreed Daniel, blinking at the blinding sun; "it's pretty dark. Never mind; I'm here."

Black, crinkled, and weather-stained hands, hard as horn, groped along the deck and clutched a bit of his coat. He did not draw it away.

"Mister good boss. Pete close up him—go die. Pete give Mister him beeg secret—make him reech——"

The voice trailed off into indistinct nothingness. Daniel heard a good deal about the "plenty big groper," the "debil-debil," and a few indistinct references to himself and the secret.

At sunset there was silence. Daniel turned the bandaged head up to the light, and saw that the fellow was dead. He got up and stretched his limbs. In the distance he could see the rest of the boys excitedly clambering over the rocks ashore, where one of their number had harpooned a bull-turtle in shallow water. He did not disturb their sport.

Single-handed he began to prepare the quiet body for its long sleep. He found something tightly clutched in the dead hand—a screw of lead tobacco-paper—and removed it. There was a little roll of torn red flannel inside, and within that—oh, heaven of heavens!—Pete's "beeg, beeg secret" lay in the palm of his hand, and the fisherman gazed stupefied at the treasure Fate had unexpectedly thrust upon him.

A single black pearl of undescribable grace

and beauty! The dying sunset caught it as it lay in his hand, throwing up the shimmering beauty of his treasure.

Where had Pete got it? Had he worked on a pearling lugger? Or had Fate washed up on this strip of inhospitable sand some black-lipped oyster from the deeper seas? The boy was dead, and he would never know. All he remembered was the words the dying Kanaka had uttered: "Mister good boss! Pete gib Mister him beeg secret—make him reech!"

Daniel's thoughts sped away to his dream island down south, with its unplanted bananas and paw-paws, its phantom curing-station on the beach, and the woods of bloodwood and flame trees, where he might dream of Hester.

Rousing himself, he thrust the roll of red flannel into his belt, and sent a shrill whistle across the darkening water. It was answered by a jabber of voices and the soft swish of oars, as his boys pulled for the lugger.

The night wind coming up from the south carried them homeward towards the low sweep of yellow sand, where the smell of smoke and dried fish hung perpetually on the heavy air.

The Boss was irritated and foul-mouthed when he learned of the loss of one of his best divers. Unfortunately for himself, he attempted to vent his wrath on Daniel.

The younger man looked into the gin-bleared eyes. "I'm not going to argue," he said simply, "but if you are spoiling for a fight, I'm your man, and there's a nice strip of firm sand down below the curing-sheds. What's more, I've done with skippering your lugger."

Gin had given the Boss a false courage. He refused to let the matter rest. It ended in an appeal to fisticuffs. The lank-haired woman who degraded, rather than represented, the civilisation of the *bêche de mer* curing-station, came down to the sand and apathetically watched the struggle.

When it was over, Daniel washed the dirt from his fists, and strolled down to the rough bloodwood jetty, where his Kanaka boys were carrying the casks of *bêche* from the schooner to the smoke-house.

Then he strolled on towards a patch of sparse sea-grass which grew out of a strip of blue mud, covered at high water, rank-smelling at low. He wanted to bid good-bye to the place, to fill his soul with the flat, sordid ugliness of it all, for his dream island was soon to become reality. Was not the contrast, therefore, worth while?

III.

It took him fourteen busy weeks to realise his dream.

At the close of one hot September afternoon a tidy little schooner skimmed along the shimmering seas and cast anchor just outside the still lagoon.

Daniel rowed himself ashore in the dinghy. His heart beat high with excitement as his feet cracked the shells on the beach. He dragged the boat up over kelp and shingle. Then he climbed the slopes above and threw himself down on a patch of grey sward at the foot of a jungle of wattles and tea trees.

He was alone. As far as he looked, to east or west, the land was his, as much as a Government lease could make it—his, the virgin soil to make or mar; his, the glittering glory of the bees, birds, and beetles, the flaming beauty of the forest flowers, the bewitching loveliness of the coral grottoes in the lagoon, the richness of the untried soil; his, the rocks girded with limpets and oysters, and his the fishing rights for a mile and more off shore.

He lay there dreaming beneath the pale yellow spikes of the paper-barked tea trees, filling his lungs with great breaths of the pure salt air, until the stars began to glitter in the heavens, and below him, on the beach, his boys were lighting their torches, with which to frighten the *debil-debil* who hid in the scrub.

There followed weeks of strenuous labour, in which the island lost a little of its desert wilderness, but none of its beauty. Under a sweet-scented eucalyptus he built his squatter's shanty, with its bark pillars, up which he trained a crimsoned-leaved vine dragged from the forest.

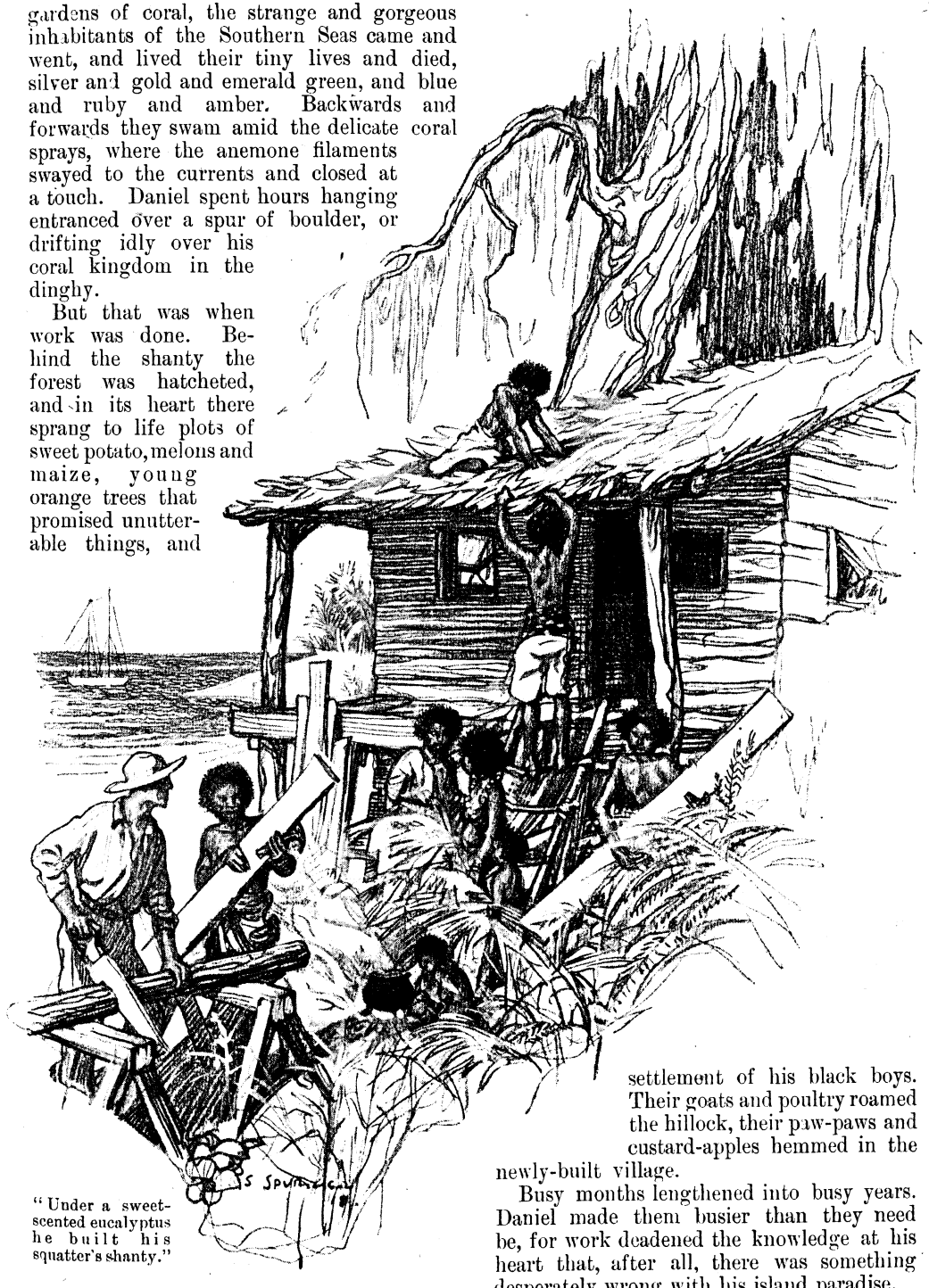
Feathery pampas grass waved about his doorway, intersected with pandanus palms; gorgeous orange fruits made patches of glory against a sombre setting of sighing beech oaks. From branch to branch ran the slender ropes of the tree-fern and the thorny lawyer vine. Here and there a scarlet flame tree lit up the dim recesses of the jungle, throwing a ruddy glow over orchids and spider lilies.

Round about him blue doves cooed and mated, honey-eaters nested, night-jars made their homes in dim recesses. On the coral boulders in the bay sat reef-heron and crested tern, watching the multitudinous life below them in the shallow waters of the lagoon.

The unutterable beauty of that lagoon never lost its charm for him. Here, in their

gardens of coral, the strange and gorgeous inhabitants of the Southern Seas came and went, and lived their tiny lives and died, silver and gold and emerald green, and blue and ruby and amber. Backwards and forwards they swam amid the delicate coral sprays, where the anemone filaments swayed to the currents and closed at a touch. Daniel spent hours hanging entranced over a spur of boulder, or drifting idly over his coral kingdom in the dinghy.

But that was when work was done. Behind the shanty the forest was hatcheted, and in its heart there sprang to life plots of sweet potato, melons and maize, young orange trees that promised unutterable things, and



"Under a sweet-scented eucalyptus he built his squatter's shanty."

banana plantations intersected with sugar. Hidden out of sight, beyond the coral headland, was the curing-station and the settlement of his black boys. Their goats and poultry roamed the hillock, their paw-paws and custard-apples hemmed in the newly-built village.

Busy months lengthened into busy years. Daniel made them busier than they need be, for work deadened the knowledge at his heart that, after all, there was something desperately wrong with his island paradise.

When work was over, he was unspeakably lonely. Worn out with the day's toil, he would throw himself down beneath the

verandah and stare out with unseeing eyes at the violet shadows of the mainland, behind which the sun sank in gold and scarlet splendour. Anon in the darkness would twinkle the lights of alongshore shipping, while above him glittered the constellations, trembling in their excess of brilliancy. During the wet season the patter of rain on the roof, and the chorus of happy frogs out on the flats before the cocoa-nut groves, would make him moody and irritable.

He was a lonely man. Looking ahead, he grew afraid. So far he had been sufficient for himself. He found himself no longer sufficient, and the extent of this insufficiency startled and amazed him.

Once he was walking slowly and with bent head through the littered miscellanea of the village, where his boys sat smoking and making cats'-cradles with twine. He had been counting his barrels of dried *bêche*, and tabulating the banana branches in the sheds, and his mind was full of figures.

An old gin hailed him, the wife of his head boy.

"Boss is sick," she said reproachfully.

Daniel laughed and heeled up before her.

"What's wrong with me?" he asked curiously.

"Boss knows his own heart," she answered sadly.

"Show me a medicine," he said bitterly. Her withered fingers pointed to the forest.

"Look, Boss!" Daniel followed the direction of her arm. A couple of gorgeous green-and-gold butterflies were working out their love-story as they fluttered from flower to flower.

The wrinkled hand travelled upwards. On a bough of a eucalyptus a couple of blue doves sat side by side, cooing to each other in happy undertones.

Daniel looked. Then he laughed and sarcastically turned away; but the sound of his heart beat furiously in his ears. He forgot the number of *bêche* in his barrels, and the banana bunches that must sail with the morning tide. He went back to the porch of his shanty. Supperless he sat beneath the stars, staring out across the shingle and the night sea.

Daniel pondered. If she were still free, would she like this island life, with its roughness and its solitude, beautiful though it was? Would she care for the roughened edition of the dapper young fellow she had known?

He was torn in two. The terms of his lease prevented him from leaving the island for another couple of years yet. And if he *did* leave it, he had unfitted himself for any other mode of life. He had given the island the best years of his life. It was too late now to make any alteration.

He got up and, lighting a candle, wrote a letter to Hester, with the night moths fluttering about his head and singeing their wings in the feeble flame.

Did she still remember? Was she still alive—married—dead?

IV.

THERE followed weeks of restless nights and feverish, overwrought days.

His hands shook as if he had been drinking, and at night the sweat made jewelled beads upon his brow that glittered in the lamplight.

It played on his health, and made him irritable and morose. One night he beat a boy for insolence. He was ashamed of his display of temper afterwards. Leaving the Kanakas packing stones on a new breakwater, he took the dinghy and spent the night on the still bosom of the seas.

There, with his head bare to the skies, he fought with his soul.

Had he done right in asking her to come? Could he face the lonely years, and the responsibility of wrecking his happiness and hers, if he let her remain?

All night he wrestled with himself beneath the stars. As dawn broke, with bent back and brow bowed on the hands that clasped the motionless oars, peace came.

He had done right. The mate-call he had stifled once could no longer be suppressed. Together they would dwell in his Dream Island, and turn it indeed to a very paradise.

If she would come!

Dawn had broken. He raised his eyes. The sea was shimmering in the first long shafts of the rising sun. With slow, powerful strokes he turned the boat homeward.

And then Fate dealt her blow.

Southward there arose a huge black column of smoke, blotting out the horizon and the heavens.

The island—his Dream Island! *What* had happened?

He rubbed at amazed eyes. A moment after he was pulling for dear life to the shore. The Kanakas, in a ferment of excitement, were piling themselves and their dillybags on board the schooner. He shouted to them, but they paid no heed.

He attempted to land.

"Come back, Boss!" they shrieked. "Him too hot land!"

It was but too true. From end to end the island was ablaze. The fire had started in a dozen different places. Fed by a light wind from the sea, the flames raced from leaf to leaf, branch to branch, dry as tinder from the recent drought.

No accident had lighted that regular succession of fresh fires, one after another, all along the shore.

Daniel strode on board.

"What the devil is the meaning of this?" he demanded.

No one answered. Their cowed and frightened eyes were fixed on the flames, as they dodged flying pieces of red-hot shingle split by the heat.

His fierce glance swept the deck. They were all there, all he knew, save the fellow he had beaten the previous night. The truth dawned on him.

"Where is Jacob?" he demanded.

A circle of dark eyes was instantly riveted on his face. He was a good Boss, but Jacob was of their race.

"Where is Jacob?" he stormed.

"That fella boy him plenty ugly temper, Boss," one said apologetically. "That fella bery sore back—bery ugly temper."

"I asked where he is," the white man said, the levelness of his tones emphasising the red-hot anger that consumed him.

"I not know, Boss," the man answered, and he could get nothing more out of any of them.

The heat was intense, and he gave orders for the schooner to put out to sea, for the wind was veering round. Smoke choked them, and bits of blazing refuse littered the deck. Fear was making some of the women hysterical.

There was nothing to be done but send them over to the mainland. But the gang refused to be parted. If any went, all must go. He realised at once that terror had made the whole party incapable of rendering any practical assistance. So he gave permission, and the little vessel curtsied to the waves that broke on the outskirts of the lagoon, and passed over into the long, slow swell of the deeps beyond.

He remained behind in the dinghy, riding well into shore just beyond the choking drift of the smoke wreaths. The heat was unbearable, scorching his face and forcing him out into the rougher water outside the narrow lagoon. Even here flying fragments blistered his hands and burned holes in his clothing.

Where was Jacob? His anger against the fellow evaporated. Was he somewhere in that dense interior, ringed about by a circle of flame, doomed to a fearful death of his own creating?

The air was black with birds and insects wheeling excitedly round, wings above wings, uttering frightened screams. The noise was deafening. Added to the crackling of burnt timber were the sharp cries of a disturbed colony of metallic starlings, their burnished plumage scintillating in the ruddy glow of the flames. Sparrow-hawks, white-bellied sea-eagles, kites, black falcons, and other birds of prey were mixed indiscriminately with little cuckoo-shrikes, blue fly-catchers, dusky honey-eaters and friar birds. Here and there a red-winged lory or a glossy cockatoo added a flash of colour and a discordant shriek to the general din.

The foreshore was full of movement. There on the hot coral, right down by the edge of the water, were scrub-fowl, quails, and bald coot. Here and there over the water fluttered a masked plover or a piebald oyster-catcher. From the coral cliffs arose dense masses of crested and brown-winged tern, white-capped noddies, and other sea-birds. Black ducks and grey teal skimmed over the lagoon, while the coral boulders out at sea, lapped by the incoming tide, were alive with reef-herons and yellow-necked mangrove bitterns.

Here and there along the beach a spiny ant-eater or white-tailed rat had been driven by the flames right down to the water's edge, and among them his goats were bleating as they rushed about frantic with fear.

It was an imposing but terrible sight. Immense bellying clouds of white smoke rose high in the heavens. Here and there, where the flames had exhausted their material, lay black patches, through which the red earth showed its naked and desolate bosom.

He pulled the dinghy round the headland. Here, on the other side of the rising ground, was a gap in the flaming circle. He ran the boat ashore, and made for a tool-shed on the edge of a patch of cultivated land, towards which the flames were racing. It needed set teeth and iron determination to force his way through the fiery blasts that heralded the flame.

The door was locked, but he threw his shoulder against it and forced it from its hinges. It was the work of a moment to

secure axe and saw, with which he bolted for dear life over scorched grass already alight in patches.

He started work on the edge of his orange grove, toiling desperately that he might save it from the oncoming flames.

It was useless. Twenty men could not win in that desperate race. Inch by inch he was beaten back to the shingle, and from there, when the heat overpowered him, to the sea.

He spent a second night rocking on its bosom, drunk with fatigue, staring with leaden eyes at the fiery tongues that crimsoned the waters of the lagoon and threw weird and flickering shadows from the coral boulders.

At dawn he was utterly spent. Sick and faint for want of food and water, he let the tide carry him out of the bay in the direction of the mainland.

The swell of a home-coming tug carried him towards the harbour.

"Hullo!" cried a voice. "Are you Allenbury, from the island?"

"Yes," he answered dully.

"Poor devil! Look out for the rope."

He caught the coil and attached it mechanically. Shipping his oars, he sat with head sunk on his breast, closed eyes, and hands hanging inertly between his knees, while the fussy tug towed him to the landing-stage, leaving a dirty smudge across the sky to mark their track.

The story of his calamity had been spread by his Kanakas. A silent but sympathetic knot of onlookers watched him stagger up a flight of slimy boat-steps and disappear in the direction of the town.

"Darned hard luck," said one.

"He's taking it badly," said another. "Bet he'll go on the drink."

But Daniel did nothing of the kind. A wild, unkempt, blackened figure, even in that town of eccentricities, he staggered into the first tavern he came across, and gesticulated speechlessly for food and drink. Here also his story was known, and when, hunger satisfied, his head sank over the initials carved on the rough table, kindly hands carried the senseless man to a guest room beneath the roof. All day he slept, and far into the next morning.

Then he washed and borrowed shaving tackle, ate, drank, and slept again.

It was a week before he went out into the streets. He felt limp and weak, but his island—his dead Island of Dreams—was calling him back. He must go and see the scorched and blackened remains of what had once been his. In it he had invested all his fortune. Once more he was a penniless derelict on the ocean of life.

And Hester, queen of his Dream Island, mate of his life!

He could no longer ask her to come. Hard sobs broke from his lips as he pulled with long, slow strokes through the blue waters of the narrow channel.

Here and there smoke was still rising from the four square miles of rock and coral, but, for the most part, the island lay black and lifeless.

He landed and climbed upward. His shanty and all it contained was a mass of blackened beams and charred rafters, with here and there a glint of metal that had defied the flames.

Behind, his maize and banana fields lay swathed in a shroud of grey ash, with a black haw-haw of burnt wattles about them.

Gone were the curing-station and the store barns, gone the Kanakas' settlement and the goat flock. Suffocated birds, poultry, and dead bees littered the ground. Here and there lay a singed rat or a motionless snake.

Charred twigs snapped beneath his feet, and every few yards he trod on hot ashes.

He spent the day investigating the damage. It stretched, for the most part, along the shore. The damp and thickly-matted primeval jungle in the interior had resisted the flames, but of the handiwork of the last three years not a vestige remained.

It was twilight before he got back to the landing-stage. To his surprise, his schooner lay rocking at anchor by the bloodwood jetty out in the bay, and from the beach came up the hum of Kanaka voices.

So his boys had followed him back! The island had drawn them as it had drawn him. He had not expected it of them.

A wave of misery and desolation came over him. How could he face them? How go down and join the chattering circle about the broth-pot on the shingle?

He threw himself down on the blackened ground beneath the scorched blue berries of a native ginger, and hid his face from the sight and sound of everything about him.

Coiling clouds blotted out the sun. The day faded about him, and silence and sleep settled on the blackened land and the animated circle round the glowing embers on the beach. Only the sea was awake.

Something moved. Something bent above him. Something touched the bent head



"Amazed, he turned over on his side and looked upward."

and rested there with a touch of infinite gentleness.

Amazed, he turned over on his side and looked upward. The faint starlight, filtering through the stark and naked branches above his head, showed him a woman, quiet, wise-eyed, patient, and unafraid.

She knelt down beside him and opened her arms.

"My dear," she said softly, "I have found

you! Oh, my dear!" And the tears rained down her pale cheeks and fell on his upturned face.

Magic tears! They awoke him to life. He put out his hand and touched her.

"What brought you?" he whispered.

"Your letter," she replied. "I have waited for it all these years. It told me all I wanted to know. I was perfectly ready to come."

"To this?" he asked bitterly.

"What does it matter? Let us begin anew. The ground is still rich, there are still *bêche de mer* in the sea. A year's growth will cover up all this nakedness. You are still young, and I am full of health and energy."

She stood up and stretched out her arms in the moonlight, showing him the rounded curves of her figure silhouetted against the moonlit sea. Above her the notched leaves of a fern of God made a delicate lattice-work against the glittering sky.

He got up and came to her.

"You mean that, Hester? You are not afraid?"

Small and slight, she looked up at him without speaking.

He crushed her against him. "Dream woman!" he whispered. "Dream wife!"

POSIES OF POESY.

PICK a posy full of fun
For your babe so merry—
Pansy,
Dandelion-clock,
Red-cheeked rowanberry;
Tie it to a daisy-chain,
See her strut with chuckles vain.

Pick a posy full of love
For your lover's reading:
Lad's love,
Love-in-a-mist,
Love-that-lies-a-bleeding;
Tie it round with riband blue,
Wear it for your lad so true.

Pick a posy of delight
For your friend, your sweeting:
Clove-pink,
Heather and whin,
Rose and lilac meeting;
Slip in balm and rosemary—
Lay it on your sweeting's knee.

LETITIA WITHALL.

THE WATER OF WITCHERY

By A. M. BURRAGE

Illustrated by S. Abbey

IT was John Dobson's business to inform everyone that Messrs. Steeples and Barnet's combs were the best, and, by making frequent calls upon West Country shopkeepers, to impress this upon them as an article of faith. I gather that he has succeeded to admiration, and that no good Cornishman will allow his own or his child's hair to be touched by combs of other—and therefore inferior—manufacture.

John Dobson, I believe, in all good faith attributes his success to the excellence of his wares. But I know better. It is because people cannot help liking John Dobson. He seems to exhale an atmosphere of mingled honesty, good nature, and modesty. And if the last is a doubtful virtue in one of his calling, from the point of view of business, it seems to me that he has lost little or nothing by possessing it.

As an idler in Cornwall, I was often privileged to meet him. Time and again, to my great satisfaction, we found ourselves at the same town or village, and at the same inn. We were like two cards that were continually being shuffled together in the pack.

He told me the story which I am about to relate, one stormy night, when we found ourselves fellow-guests at the Ship Hotel at Fowey. I can see him now as he told it, his red cheeks shining as if he had polished them with chamois leather, a gleam of humour in his dark eyes, and the great curved briar that he always smoked hanging from a corner of his mouth. I prefer not to attempt to retell the story in his own words, because certain little impressions that he gave me deserve to be passed on, and there were certain telling pauses that I was able to fill because I knew the man so well. This, then, is my own way of telling how Dobson visited a famous well, and what came of it.

He was at Liskeard at the time, and, besides having business there, he had calls to make at Looe, Lostwithiel, Fowey, and other towns farther west.

Now, Looe is south of Liskeard, about nine miles distant, and connected by a single line on which trains run—sometimes. Lostwithiel, which came next to Looe in the order of his travels, is farther down the main line. Dobson, therefore, found it convenient not to change his lodgings, but to remain at a certain comfortable inn at Liskeard a second night, going to Looe in the morning and returning in the evening. In any case he would have to pass through Liskeard again to get to Lostwithiel.

It so chanced that he missed his train, and to miss your train at Liskeard, when you want to get to Looe, is no laughing matter, if you are in a hurry. There was a train some time in the afternoon. The time of its going depended upon the punctual arrival of a main line train that was not always punctual.

Fortunately, Dobson was in no great hurry, and he was fond of walking. "Why shouldn't I tramp it?" he asked himself. "Do it in less than three hours, and keep myself fit. Lovely walk, I dare say it is, too."

So he set out with that quick stride that always seemed too long for his legs, blowing smoke from the curved briar, and twirling his thick cherry-wood stick. The first finger-post informed him that he was on the right road for St. Keyne and Looe.

There was something vaguely familiar to

him about the name St. Keyne. It must be quite a small place, he knew. He had never had business there. As he walked, he fell to wondering where he had heard of it, and in what connection.

He was not kept long in suspense, for, having passed a miniature railway station on the branch line, a public-house and a few cottages, he came upon another finger-post which informed him that the road he was on would take him past "The Well."

Curiosity was partly satisfied. Ah, that was it! He had heard of the Well of St. Keyne.

He was not quite sure if a notorious crime had been committed there, or if there were some mysterious property in its waters which relieved lumbago or rheumatism. But he was only kept in doubt for a very few minutes.

He found the well on the left-hand side of the road, and opposite was a cottage displaying a notice to the effect that postcards of "The Well" and of "Southey's Famous Ballad" could be obtained therein. He went in to buy one of each to send to his wife. She liked to possess souvenirs of places of interest which he happened to visit.

Outside the cottage he read "Southey's Famous Ballad," and then re-read it, two parallel creases in his brow.

He had never held himself a superstitious man, but suddenly it occurred to him that he went out of his way to avoid walking under ladders, that he felt uncomfortable when he found himself one of thirteen in a room, that he encouraged the overtures of black cats. Suddenly he realised that he gave way to these things because, deep down in his mind, he thought there might be something in them.

Now, the legend connected with this well was to the effect that the first of a wedded pair to drink of its water should thenceforth have the mastery. It sounded rubbish, but here was this chap Southey, a man important enough to write the life of Nelson, composing poems about it! He wouldn't do that if he didn't believe there was something in it. And it was evident, by the way it was advertised by finger-posts and postcards, that the well was famous. He seemed to draw some illogical conclusion to the effect that, if thirteen were really an unlucky number, there was no reason why the water of that well should not have the mysterious property claimed for it.

It happened that at this time there was a small cloud in the unusually clear sky of Dobson's domestic happiness. It was no serious quarrel—indeed, quarrel is too strong a word to use in the circumstances. At the worst, it was a mere difference of opinion.

Dobson had a very pretty daughter of nineteen or twenty. I have seen her photograph, so I can vouch for her prettiness. She was engaged to a clerk in a local office who was then earning a salary of a hundred and thirty a year. The young couple wanted to get married immediately, but Dobson had refused his consent until the prospective husband's salary had increased by twenty pounds. This was because he considered a hundred and fifty a year the minimum income on which a couple could face married life with any hope of happiness. Mrs. Dobson, like the soft-hearted, indulgent mother she was, had ranged herself on the side of the young lovers; so, although there was little ill-feeling, a deadlock had arisen.

Standing there in the road between the cottage and the well, it occurred to Dobson for the first time that he was not really master of his house. If Mrs. Dobson did not rule him, he admitted to himself he did not rule her. Hitherto they had both pulled the same way in perfect agreement, and now, after more than two decades of married life, had arisen a situation which, seen suddenly by Dobson in a new light, began to hurt his pride. His word ought to have been sufficient, and there should have been no further argument. Hadn't the woman given her promise to obey him? It was high time that he asserted his authority—if he could.

He looked at the well. Perhaps it was all rot, but there might be something in some of these old legends. One never knew.

He glanced stealthily at the cottage, and then peered up and down the road. Nobody was in sight. A few seconds later he was bending over the water.

Like many wells in that delightful corner of England, the famous well of St. Keyne is but a few inches deep. A spring comes bubbling out of the gravel soil, and, overflowing the edge of a stone basin, rushes downhill to join the stream which is dignified by the title of the Looe River. Dobson bent over the basin, made a cup of his hands, and sipped.

II.

When he had left the well behind him, Dobson's stride became longer and quicker, and he twirled his stick more gaily and vigorously than ever. It may have been



"'You seem in a pretty poisonous temper,' he remarked. 'What's the matter?'"

pure imagination, but he was conscious of a new power. He felt in the best of humours, but extremely masterful. He was the captain of his soul. He had a say in the disposal of two other souls. He was the breadwinner, the head of a household. When he found time to go home to Bristol, he'd show them—that wife and daughter of his!

The way to Looe is pretty, but for four or five miles there is a certain sameness about the scenery. Up-and-down country it is, and well wooded, with the road running between flower-strewn banks for two-thirds of the way. The road, the river, and the railway never part company. Sometimes the river is on the left, and sometimes the railway; sometimes both are on the right. The three must appear on the maps as so many strings loosely and carelessly plaited.

Dobson that morning was in that mood so irritably permanent with Browning's "Duchess," who liked whate'er she looked on, and her looks went everywhere. He did not, however, notice the sky, and the sudden and fierce downpour took him completely by surprise. He turned at once and doubled back to an empty and ruined cottage which he had left fifty yards behind him.

The door stood hospitably open, and Dobson entered, treading carefully for fear of rotten boards, and putting a dozen or so rats to instant rout.

It was raining harder than ever now, and heavy sprays, driven aslant by the wind, came in through the open space that had once

enclosed a window. The room was cheerless and depressing to a degree almost sufficient to damp the spirits of the cheery little commercial traveller. Having spent three or four minutes with the discoloured walls, rotten floor-boards, and broken fireplace, he decided to "try what it was like upstairs."

The ascent was perilous, and Dobson put his foot clean through one of the stairs; but eventually he reached the upper floor without mishap. It was not so dismal there, for the first window he looked from gave him a good view, and he could see for some hundred yards along the road by which he had come. Over the shoulder of a hill that faced him he saw, to his satisfaction, that the clouds were breaking, and the blue already showing through.

"It won't be much," he thought; and at that moment the sound of bicycle bells attracted his attention to the road.

A young man and a girl were riding abreast, pedalling rapidly downhill, both looking wet through. The man—or boy—seemed slightly older than his companion, but they were both very young—scandalously young to dream of getting married, and Dobson was soon to discover that they stood in this relation to each other.

They saw the cottage, and, at a word from the boy, applied their brakes. The boy took the girl's machine from her as she jumped from the saddle. A moment later he heard them both clatter into the room downstairs. Dobson, sociable soul, considered for a moment the matter of going downstairs and speaking to them. The fear of being an intruder dissuaded him. Also they seemed to have that manner of conscious superiority assumed, sometimes quite unconsciously, by the very young of the upper classes.

The first words he heard, however, decided him that he must make known his presence.

"No," said the girl, "you're not going to kiss me now—you're all wet."

"Well, so are you, for that matter," came the answer.

Then followed the sound of a brief struggle, then the girl's voice rang out in protest.

"Oh, Cyril, you are a pig—a nasty, cold, wet, *loathsome* pig!"

"Nice humour you're in," Cyril made answer. "Don't get ratty with me, old thing. I didn't make it rain."

"No, but you can help mauling me when we're both sopping wet, I suppose."

"I often think," said the young man, with a pathetic sigh, "that you don't really love me, Margaret. I always want to be mauled by you. Think of Francesca down in Hades—and jolly sight more uncomfortable than you are, if I know anything about Hades. D'you think she says, 'Go away, Paolo! You're much too hot, and you've got a nasty burnt smell,' when he wants to kiss her?"

So much had Dobson been compelled to hear, for surprise and amusement had rendered him temporarily inactive. Now, however, he opened his lips and produced from somewhere deep down in his interior a tolerable imitation of the hollow—or churchyard—cough. It was an awesome noise, I know, because he did it again for my benefit.

He thought at first that it had taken effect, for no more was said in the room downstairs for quite a considerable period of time. So Dobson lit another pipe and watched the rain ruling straight lines against a background of trees. Presently, however, Cyril's voice ascended, clear as a bell.

"You seem in a pretty poisonous temper," he remarked. "What's the matter?"

The answer was inaudible.

"But there must be *something* the matter."

"Oh, don't, Cyril!"

Dobson regarded the atmospheric conditions outside, whilst a troubled frown gathered on his brows.

"I s'pose they didn't hear me cough," he reflected. "Perhaps I'd better try again."

He was about to do so, when the voice of Cyril arrested him.

"Wonder if there's anything in the legend about that well?" said he.

Dobson checked the cough. He was interested in the well. He wanted to hear their opinions. The sudden change of the topic of conversation from love-making and the hint of a quarrel to a subject in which he himself was interested made him forget that he was still eavesdropping.

"You don't wonder," answered the girl; "you believe there is. You're superstitious, and silly, and mean, and——"

A voice with a note of deep injury in it arose in protest.

"My aunt! What *is* the matter, Margaret? What have I done now?"

"Oh, you know!"

"I'm superstitious, and mean, and—— I say, I never said I believed in the bally well, did I? And if I did believe in it—which I don't—you needn't go off the deep end as if I'd committed some sort of crime."

"I think"—the voice was suspiciously

muffled—"I think you've been very mean, Cyril."

The answer she received was only partly coherent, but the outraged Cyril was understood to call upon his gods that they should give women a little of the priceless gift of common-sense.

"It's all very well to bluster and be rude, but I saw you. While I was in the cottage, looking at the postcards, you slipped out and got some of the water in your flask. I watched you through the window. You meant to drink it immediately after we're married, in the hope that you'd—you'd rule me in everything. I thought we were just friends, and still going to be friends when we'd been married. You know how I hate authority, and we'd promised each other there'd be none of that. Then you go and——"

"Of course I did. I did get some of the water. But, my dear, dear girl, if I were fool enough to believe that it was going to make me master and you slave, I'd never dream of drinking any of it."

"It's all very well to say that. Why did you get it?"

"For a joke. I meant to drink it after we'd been married, and tell you about it. I could have ragged you a bit. But, good Heavens, surely you see for yourself that the whole thing's rubbish?"

She did not answer, and Cyril continued in a slightly altered tone—

"Or, if you don't look on it in that way, why did *you* get some in your scent bottle?"

"I?"

"Yes, when I came back to the cottage to dig you out, and you set me reading those yards of doggerel about the beastly well. I watched *you* through the window, too!"

Margaret seemed taken aback, if so much may be interpreted by two or three minutes' silence.

"I wouldn't have dreamed of it," she said, "if I hadn't seen you. I thought I'd get even with you, and do as you did."

Cyril groaned, making quite an uncanny noise in that ruined habitation.

"It's a merciful Providence that gave me the tip to look through the window," said he. "Think of the disgraceful scene there'd have been in the vestry after our marriage—bride and bridegroom both produce bottles and start swigging! Horrible! Do you know where the water out of your bottle is going, Margaret? It's going to mingle with what I've got in my flask."

There was a splash, and then a little splash. Then:

"Margy! Silly old owl! Did you think I wanted to tyrannise over you? Come here, you poor, little, wet thing! Was I a pig, then?"

There was a long spell of silence.

"You do really love me, don't you, Cyril?" said Margaret at last. "And we're always going to be friends as well, aren't we?"

Here Dobson recollected himself and coughed again, this time with great effect.

III.

It is probable that most other men, had they been in Dobson's place and overheard this milk-and-sugar comedy, would have been attacked by biliousness. But with Dobson it was not so. When the first gleam of sunshine had proved the signal for the instant departure of the two young people, he descended the stairs and went his way, with his head full of uncomfortable thoughts.

Something in the dialogue he had overheard seemed to push him into the dock before his conscience.

Dobson's conscience was like a rural magistrate who, living in a well-behaved neighbourhood, was wont to make too much of the few trivial offences that were brought before his notice. He had a lashing tongue, under which Dobson stood cowed and abject. A short half-hour ago the little commercial traveller had walked with a fine stride, high spirits showing in every movement of him. Now his whole aspect was remindful of a dog who sees the bath being filled and the carbolic soap being cut up.

This is how Conscience addressed John Dobson—

"Twenty odd years ago you and your wife were just like those two young things in the cottage, though maybe you weren't so classy. But they reminded you of your old selves, didn't they, now? And you used to have little quarrels like that, and make it up, same as they did. Didn't you? And there wasn't any question of one or the other ruling the household. You just went into marriage as equals, and it worked well. Yes, you can't deny it worked well. You've been together these twenty something years, and had practically no words. And now—now you and she have found something small to differ over, you go and break all the rules. You go and drink that water, not for a joke, but in the deliberate hope of giving you an

advantage over your wife, so that your word could be law.

"Who told you that your opinion was worth more than hers? Eh, who told you? And did she have a chance of drinking a drop of water, or did you, through being in the neighbourhood of the well, take an unfair advantage? Over twenty years of happiness and fair and honourable dealing gone—wallop! John Dobson, I'm ashamed of you!"

John Dobson was thoroughly ashamed of himself by the time he got to Looe. He improved his condition a little, however, by going to a local jeweller's and buying a bangle heavy enough to manacle the most desperate felon. He showed it to me at the conclusion of his narrative, when I was laughing heartily, not at him, but with him. It was quite obvious that he had found some way to undo the harm he thought he had done.

"You remind me," I said, "of the schoolboy who wouldn't pray that he might be top of the batting averages, because he thought that Divine intervention on his behalf wouldn't be fair to his rivals."

Dobson laughed heartily and withdrew the mighty briar from his lips.

"Yes," he confessed, "I reckon I am a bit like that."

"It's all very well," said I, "and you've certainly bought Mrs. Dobson a very handsome present; but suppose, when you get home, you find the masterfulness stirring up within you, and you can't help insisting on laying down the law. After all, there may be magic in that water, you know."

"Ah, that's all right," said my friend, and his eyes were like stars and his smile dazzling. "You see, when I got into Looe, I drank such a mort o' cider, wishing good luck and long life to those two young things, that"—here his voice was full of a wistful earnestness—"I don't think a little drop of water like I swallowed can do much harm—do *you?*"



THE HAYFIELD.

BY BIRKET FOSTER.

YOUNG BERNARD

By E. M. JAMESON

Illustrated by Dudley Tennant

THERE was little doing at the offices of Lowry, Mintern and Lowry these days; a man was left with too much time on his hands for thinking.

John Lowry sat in the revolving chair at his desk, elbows planted firmly on the blotting-pad, chin on clenched hands. In the depths of his heart he cursed the fate that had condemned him to lameness, and to consequent incapacity to serve his country in the way he craved. Only hard, physical action could cure the ache in his breast. Its hurt now was just as acute as six months ago, and the passing of the days brought no respite.

Even lawyering had been filched from him. Patriotism reigned supreme. There was no M—— *versus* N—— in the Courts, no case to fight tooth and nail. Even the hardest-up of his clients could not, an he wished, serve a summons on his debtor. There was a truce to all but fighting.

Lowry had seen his friends depart, carelessly, joyously, as those who embark on a hunting foray, while he himself, lustier than most of them, with great thews and sinews straining to help in his country's defence, got left behind, just because, at a shoot two years earlier, a charge of shot, sent by a careless member of the party, had found a billet in his knee. The small black things had shattered the bone and stiffened the joint, putting him out of action. He gave his services, of course, in work at which women were just as capable. But it was real hard, physical fatigue and danger he wanted—something that would soothe for ever the ache in his heart, still there, and never likely to die, he told himself, until he died.

All the nights when he had tossed and turned sleeplessly there had come to him the words "They also serve who only stand and wait." They mocked him now, in the midst of his fierce pain, no comfort to a man of his strength, who thirsted to be up and doing great things. There are worse wounded than lie on the battlefield, and Lowry, the sportsman, the unerring shot, was one of the number. He felt mentally and physically bruised as he sat there rumpling his hair, eyes dark and glowering. What was the use of anything in this disappointing old world, anyway?

His time lately had gone in drawing up wills and marriage settlements for boys and girls whose first wedding anniversary might never dawn. Only a month ago young Heatherwick, of the Fusiliers, had come to make over his worldly possessions to Margery, his wife, aged nineteen, married the previous day.

"Just in case they snipe me," he said cheerfully. "Hard on the old dear, but she takes the risks like a Trojan."

And Heatherwick's round, boyish face looked at him from the newspapers that morning — killed in action. Poor little feather-headed Margery had taken the risks. Maid, wife, widow in one short month! Well, she would get over it in time. But they had no business to send boys like Heatherwick to the Front. Men of thirty, like himself—he pulled up short with a groan—no, men like himself, winged, out shooting, by a careless stranger, were useless in the fighting line. Slight, round-faced boys were taken and he left—to eat his heart out.

There came a knock at the door. The youngest of his clerks stood there.

"A lady to see you, sir."

Lowry, suddenly busy among his papers, shook his head.

"Tell the lady I am unable to give an interview to-day. To-morrow between ten-thirty and two."

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The boy hesitated for an instant.

"Well?" snapped Lowry, whose temper was badly frayed. Ordinarily a genial employer, he found the sight of any probable fighting man intolerable. Jeffs was drilling in his spare time, preparatory to enlistment, and Jeffs was of microbic proportions in comparison with himself.

"The lady is most urgent, sir."

"Give her my message."

The door closed again, to reopen a moment later, after an apologetic knock. Jeffs felt that to face a horde of Uhlans would be a trifle compared with this one official scowl.

"Very sorry, sir, but the lady won't go."

"Nonsense!"

"She says she will wait in the outer office until you come through; she seems in great trouble."

"My good boy"—he marked with satisfaction that Jeffs blenched—"if I were to grant interviews to all the women, God help them, who are in great trouble these times, the office would be besieged."

"No doubt, sir, but they wouldn't all be likely to want to see you."

Young Jeffs dared to speak with alert confidence, standing upright at the door. Only a month ago he had a slouching stoop: now he held himself erect, and looked compact and wiry, not the weedy chap he had seemed, but a fighting unit whose drilling had made him achieve the requisite number of inches.

In his wildest flights of fancy John Lowry had never pictured himself envying Jeffs. But he envied him now, with a good solid envy that only just stopped short of hatred and malice and all uncharitableness.

"Drilling's doing you good, Jeffs."

"Yes, sir."

Jeffs stood at attention.

"And the lady, sir?"

"To-morrow, between ten-thirty and—— What's that in your hand, Jeffs, confound you?"

"Lady's card, sir. She told me to give it to you, if you held out long."

His employer's face relaxed. He extended his hand.

"I'm holding out for all I'm worth. Give me the card."

"There's a pencilled note on the other side, sir; I was asked to draw your attention to it."

Lowry took the card.

"Kindly oblige me by putting a little coal on the fire."

Jeffs obeyed with alacrity. The lady waiting in the outer room had made a considerable impression on him. He determined to carry the situation for her, if he could. He crashed a piece of coal into the grate, and thus did not hear the smothered exclamation that came from the head of the firm.

When he turned, after replacing the coal-nippers, Lowry was at his desk again, standing with his back to the room. The small square of cardboard lay whitely upon the carpet.

"In five minutes show Mrs. Alardyce in, Jeffs."

"Very good, sir." Jeffs spoke from a thankful heart.

Left alone, John Lowry took a couple of brushes from the bureau drawer and brushed his hair violently. He was no fop, but he liked things seemly and in order. He was gaunt enough, in all conscience, without the rumplement of his close-cropped hair. That accomplished, he still had enough left of the five minutes to walk over to the window and survey the grey sky between the roof-tops, and to return to stand at his desk before the door opened again. His heart beat in dull, measured strokes that seemed to boom in his ears. It required a prodigious effort when Jeffs announced: "Mrs. Alardyce."

"*Mrs. Alardyce!*"

He could not imagine her married. He had seen her last nearly a year ago, when she was nineteen, and absurdly young at that. He had told himself that it would be impossible to see her again after her marriage, six months ago. But circumstances had been too strong for him. It was like old times to know he might serve her, as he had served her ever since she was a little girl in pigtails, with a heart-shaped face and big clear eyes that touched a fibre in him always.

They were very large now, and clear, as she stood before him, with a kind of burning brightness in them instead of softness. But the face he remembered and loved as faintly pink was now without a trace of colour.

In the greatness of her trouble he forgot his own. He was her friend again, her servitor. He had never been able to withstand those eyes of hers—he never would.

He took the small grey-gloved hand held out to him, and remembered only that she was the little girl who had first enlisted his services to help her find a lost doll. Absurd

as it seemed, he now remembered that doll, the least beautiful of the many she possessed, but the best-beloved. He recollected finding the thing near a bush in the meadow, spread out stiffly with extended arms, glass eyes staring up at the sky, a film of dew on the limp frock.

That was the way our men lay—perhaps the way that Bernard Alardyce might lie.

He put the thought from him as he released her hand and drew forward a chair for her near the fire.

"You are cold," he said. She was trembling in every limb. "May I get you anything—a cup of tea?"

She gave a twisted little attempt at a smile that hurt him to the soul.

"Tea? No, thank you, John. I want to talk to you. Are you very busy?"

"Never too busy to help you," said Lowry quietly. He had gained control over himself, those dull, booming echoes of his heart ceased to block his hearing. He stirred the fire, sending a red glow over the comfortable room, and over the whiteness, too, of her forlorn little face. She began to take off her gloves.

"You don't mind? Or isn't it professional? If anybody comes——"

"No one shall come; I'll tell them."

At the door he had a quiet colloquy with Jeffs, and, returning, looked down at her.

"Have you had any lunch to-day?"

Her eyes wandered to the clock on the mantelshelf. It marked four-thirty. She shook her head.

"I never even gave it a thought."

"And breakfast?"

"Breakfast? Yes, I think I remember breakfast. But what does it matter?"

There was a trace of petulance in her voice.

"They usually bring me a cup of tea at this time," went on Lowry imperturbably—there was such an extraordinary satisfaction in having her there to be cared for, even in this commonplace way—"and I must own to feeling the loss of it when by any chance I don't have it. I told them to bring you a cup as well."

"It's good of you, but"—in the firelight he saw a tear glance brightly down her averted face—"you promised that no one should come in. I have so much to say."

"They'll only bring a little tray to the door. And then, when you've had a cup of tea and a sandwich——"

"Do you have sandwiches?" she asked, with quick suspicion.

"Invariably."

He lied imperturbably, feeling he might be forgiven. "They make them extraordinarily well at a restaurant close by."

"You shall eat them all."

"We will eat sandwich for sandwich, if you please," said Lowry, "and then we can talk. I wasn't particularly keen on lunch myself, and I begin to feel what your old nurse used to call 'a sinking' somewhere in my anatomy."

"Poor old nurse! How sorry she would be now! She always prophesied disaster for me. She said I had it in my face."

"Preposterous! You've always sailed through life very pleasantly, Joan."

"Yes, I've always had what I wanted—even Bernard."

"Even Bernard. And now you have him——"

"I haven't—I don't know—perhaps——"

"Good Heavens! Not——"

Lowry, arrested in the act of limping to the door, looked back at her. Her face grew paler. He thought she was going to faint.

"No, no, not in that way. You haven't seen a later edition?"

"I have seen nothing."

"Or heard?"

"No."

Young Jeffs knocked at the door. Lowry took the tray from him and put it on the table.

"Two lumps, Joan?"

"I don't care for any tea, thank you."

Lowry went on with his preparations. To a small table beside her he brought a cup of tea and a plate containing a sandwich.

"I can't eat."

"You're going to try, just to please me. Eat one, and I'll let you off the others."

He stood over her until she drank a cup of tea and finished a sandwich. She was really faint from want of food.

"That's better. I won't worry you to eat another morsel."

"They're so good I'd like another, please." She revived visibly before his eyes.

"John, do you think he will come back?"

"Young Bernard? Why, yes, I expect so. He has always had somebody's luck and his own. And, you know, he's done the right thing by his country."

"He never told me he had volunteered," went on Joan. "I suppose he thought I'd have less time to worry if I didn't know. He went out as if to the office every morning, and came back as usual in the evening. And



"Lowry heard a subdued sound from Joan, half laugh, half sob, passionately glad."

I never knew. I should have been so different if I'd known. I was cross sometimes over trifles, and I wouldn't have been if I'd known."

Her lips quivered, her eyes, wide with trouble, looked into the firelight.

"He's not the chap to remember trifles."

Lowry knew about as much of Bernard Alardyce's proclivities as he knew of those of the Shah of Persia. He had met him twice since Bernard had emerged from boyhood, and each time had come to the conclusion that he was one of the most ordinary young men to be seen in a day's march—and the plainest. But since he had been deemed worthy of acceptance by Joan Ingleby, his value—not his surface value, perhaps, but something that went deeper—had increased fifty-fold. Moreover, whatever dignity young Bernard lacked had been supplied in ample measure by his answer to his country's need.

Joan put down the remnant of sandwich. There was a dryness in her throat, and she shook her head when her host suggested another cup of tea. She was beautifully dressed, but her things were carelessly worn, as if she had donned them in a hurry. As



"Young Bernard stood on the threshold, tall and lank and eager-eyed."

she threw back her furs, he could see the softness of her slim throat, and her chin with its dimple, and the way her hair was rolled smoothly at the base of her head. Her pretty hair! He wanted to see more of it.

"Take off your hat, Joan; you'll be fifty times more comfortable."

"May I?" she exclaimed gratefully. He took the soft velvet from her, warm and perfumed. And at last he had the Joan he knew, hardly changed from the child of the doll hunt, grave-eyed and sweet. Lowry looked for a moment, then went over to his desk and fumbled among his papers. Heavens, how it hurt him to have her there, glorifying his dull room, and yet how unspeakably it soothed that she had need of his help!

He meant to do the straight thing by young Bernard, but he must have just an instant's respite to marshal his forces. He went back to the fireside and sat down in his huge padded chair. She stirred and came out of her reverie, smiling at him gravely. Her cheeks were tinged with colour—hope had revived.

"You always give me such a *safe* feeling, John."

"Do I?"

"Courage comes back at the mere sight of you."

"Tea is a great pick-me-up."

She let the remark pass. On her hands, placed together on her knee, he caught sight of her wedding-ring in its new shining, the only ring she wore. Between her thumb and forefinger she twisted it slowly. His own grasp on the arms of the chair tightened. That was the symbol of young Bernard's claim on her.

He sat erect.

"Now tell me all you care to, and I'll listen. No one will disturb us."

There was silence for a moment. He saw her stroke the wedding-ring with a slow, infinite tenderness, as if it were a sentient suffering being like herself. Her first remark was startling.

"John, have you ever been in love?"

She waited, turning her serious glance upon him. He took up the tongs and placed the coals together more symmetrically.

"Yes—once." The monosyllables were jerked out hoarsely. He did not look at her. If he had, she must have seen and understood—even she, absorbed in her love for young Bernard.

"Then perhaps you know how sometimes it hurts—what a joy it is, and what a frightful pain, and how sometimes it makes one want to wound the very being one would cheerfully die for."

"Does it?"

"Not in your case, perhaps, but with—someone small-minded and exacting, like myself. Bernard and I got on one another's nerves latterly."

"Did you?"

Lowry wondered if his jerked out interpolations would satisfy her.

"And yet, I suppose, there were never two people more truly in love than we were"—she caught herself up sharply—"*are*. But when we had really settled down, we each wanted our own way, and we—got into the habit of bickering almost every day. It was mostly my fault, but—I didn't know before that I was so quick-tempered."

"Never to me."

"But you always brought out the best in me," said Joan gravely—"always, John. How *could* I be anything else but good with you?"

He let the remark pass. What was there to say? To him she was always the one woman; it hurt him to hear her adversely discussed, even by herself.

"Things got worse and worse," went on Joan, stroking the small golden circlet. "I can see now how silly it all was, though then it seemed a tragedy when Bernard went away without kissing me in the morning. John, did you ever think I was sulky?"

"Never!"

"I suppose different people arouse different feelings"—her tone was puzzled—"but I was very sulky sometimes. I see now that towards the end"—she checked herself again—"he was more long-suffering and—and very quiet and subdued in his manner. It was that he knew he would have to leave me soon." Her eyes, wide and burning, were fixed on her listener. "He ought to have told me."

"He ought to have told you."

"It wasn't fair. No, no, that sounds as if I blamed him, and I don't—it was a fine thing to spare me the anticipation as long as possible. But I would have been nicer to him. I love him so, John, and yet you would have thought, the last day or two, that I hated him. I told him I was sorry I had ever married him—I can see his face now—and that evidently he was sorry, too. He took a step forward and—and held me for a moment closely—closely. I could hear his heart beating, and—John, are you listening?—*I pushed him away!*" Her voice broke. "John, you remember I was sometimes impatient, but never cruel."

"Never."

Lowry wondered when his torture was to cease.

"And after that he went out of the room, and I heard the front door bang. It seemed in some strange way to echo for hours in my heart. Are you very tired of hearing, John?"

"No," he lied hoarsely, his hands hard gripped.

"I must have stayed there for hours. I began to be sorry, to make good resolutions, to realise that we couldn't go on in this way—it was bad for us—and, after all, we cared for one another, only we—I was as selfish as I could be. But I made plans. We'd end up our quarrel when he came back that evening. I knew he cared just as much as I did. And then, as I moved across the hall, I saw a letter in the box. It was from Bernard, and it told me he was leaving that very day—that he had meant to tell me, but—he guessed perhaps I'd be glad, as I didn't care for him any more!"

She gave a dry sob, tracing in the coals, with burning gaze, that sad day's happenings.

"Afterwards—I hardly remember—I must have gone upstairs to put on my hat, for presently I found myself running—running—running to the railway station, praying all the time that I might see him again. It didn't seem possible, but God must have been sorry for me. The train was late. I reached the platform just as the last part of the train was disappearing, and leaning out, as if he looked for something, was Bernard. The crowds were cheering and waving hats and handkerchiefs, and I couldn't get through. But I climbed on a truck and held out my arms and prayed again, hard, inarticulately, that he might see and understand. And he did. We just looked at one another, and we *knew*. He went off with a smile on his face, for he guessed how glad I was I had married him—how he was the only man in the world for me. It was just as if he took me in his arms again and I held on tightly. I knew he was calling my name, though I couldn't hear it for the cheering. A woman near me was saying, between her sobs: 'Bless the dear, brave lads! There's a many that'll never come back.' And even then, with Bernard's look thrilling through and through me, I felt glad and proud and happy that he had done his duty. Later, in the night, when I lay awake, I seemed to realise her words more, and every night since; and I wonder if I shall be punished that way, or whether——" Her voice grew very low. "John, do you think he will come back to me? Every time there's a list published I read it, and when I've finished I begin again—killed and wounded—and when I've read it over three times I breathe again. Then, in the midst of my rejoicing, I remember that all those men have wives or mothers to love them as I love Bernard. One day, perhaps, his name will be there. Do you think he will come back?"

Lowry rose stiffly to his feet and leaned against the mantelshelf, where his face was in shadow. There were beads of moisture on his forehead. He felt tired, as if he had passed through some crisis of his life. More than once, during her hurried disclosures, he had asked himself what might happen if young Bernard never came back. He fought down his thoughts desperately. Now, at her question, he shook himself free, and was able to meet her eyes unashamed.

"Always believe the best, Joan; it's never any use meeting troubles half-way, because often they never happen. Get busy all the day, and then you'll sleep at night."

"I tried working parties, and the incessant stitch, stitch, stitch, nearly drove me mad. Now I go every day to amuse the refugee children. It's a kind of forlorn consolation to see others worse off than oneself—people who have lost their nearest and dearest, and their homes and household gods."

She rose and looked around for her hat. Lowry brought it to her, and picked up her furs from the floor beside her chair.

"I've taken up an unconscionable amount of your time, John."

He touched her hand and let it drop again, not daring to trust himself. He felt like a poor wretch lost in the desert, parched with thirst, a brazen expanse of sky above, burning sands around, in a solitude unimaginable.

She looked up, struck by some element about him

"What is it? You are worried, and I never noticed."

Lowry turned and dragged his stiff limb after him towards the door.

"Did it never occur to you that young Bernard is to be envied—that there are hundreds of us, maimed, who would change places with him to-morrow, and thank God for the opportunity? It's not the ones who go who need our sympathy; it's those of us who, perforce, must stay behind."

"Poor John! I'm selfish—I forgot. But you are doing so much that it didn't seem possible you were out of things."

"I'm out of the active things I want most," said Lowry quietly. "Nothing makes up for that; but one must grin and bear it, I suppose. I had to wait to cross the street to-day while a batch of recruits passed—fine fellows every one, marching along whistling, their rifles on their shoulders. Heavens, how I envied the least of them!"

She paused, looking up at him with great eyes of pity.

"Poor John!"

It was as if she came to him in the desert and moistened his parched throat. And yet, somehow, her pity hurt his manhood horribly.

After the taxi had taken her away, Lowry stood bareheaded on the pavement, looking down the quiet street. Overhead an airship sailed slowly over the city. Its envelope showed silver against the sky. He watched it until it was hidden from sight behind the roofs. Suddenly, as he turned to go, inspiration came to him—inspiration born of his craving for action, for danger. He would train at the flying school,

and then, perhaps, later—— *Fool!* Why had he not thought of it before? In the air he might be as capable as the best of them. A new, thrilling hope strung up his nerves to tension. Mintern could take on the small legal work there was to be done. He had friends among the Flying Corps. Why had he not thought of it earlier? Already he understood, in part at least, the manipulation of the engine. He must do something to kill his unworthy thoughts of young Bernard — something definite, absorbing to hand and brain.

* * * * *

It was not until a fortnight later that news came to Lowry of young Bernard. Joan had received one postcard, crumpled, dingy, bearing no news but his love and the fact that he was well—which was the best news in the world—and that he had his cap for her, with two bullet-holes through the crown.

Joan shuddered even while she smiled for pure joy and held the postcard to her heart.

That was a week ago.

To-day, when Lowry unfolded his newspaper, a familiar face looked up at him from a medallion among the printed matter, an ugly, humorous, boyish face—young Bernard's.

Lowry just sat and stared for a time. His breakfast chilled unnoticed. Bernard was among the killed, dying under heavy fire while trying to save a comrade. Private Bernard Alardyce, son of the late —— Yes, they had got him right.

The words swam beneath Lowry's eyes. How atrociously they printed the newspapers these times!

Young Bernard, only twenty-four, soon finished!

Back to Lowry's mind came the memory of the lost doll, lying stark under the bushes, staring up at the sky, and Joan's childish eyes of rapture as she thanked him. Now he must go and mourn with her because young Bernard was killed. There would be no bringing Bernard back, only the glorious record of him—glorious among many. There was no thought now of himself. In Lowry's mind was a great envy of young Bernard, and an honest wish that he might have brought Joan's husband back to her, as he had brought, long ago, the lost doll to be tended and rejoiced over. She would have heard the news earlier, before the newspapers were out. He swallowed a cup of coffee and stood up to go to her.

As he went he formed a picture of her, prostrate with grief, her fears realised, great eyes drowned in tears. He shrank from intruding upon her, yet she depended on him always when trouble came.

He was shown in at once to a room full of pale, wintry sunlight. The blinds were drawn up to their uttermost height; the piano was open, a bowl of golden and brown chrysanthemums stood on a table. And near the window, dressed to go out, was Joan. The eyes she turned on him were very soft and big and sad, but they were not tearful.

"You have heard?" she asked.

He bent his head. What inexplicable creatures women were! There was no sign of mourning about her. She looked less tired. He felt tongue-tied, and, instead of speaking, walked to the window and glanced out at the quiet street. She puzzled him. A moment later he comprehended.

She did not believe it!

"They have made a mistake—it is not true." Her voice held no tremor of doubt. "Do you think, loving him as I do, that some consciousness would not have come to me if he had been killed? Last night I slept better than any night since he went away. All the apprehension, that was like a physical hurt, left me, and a kind of peace lapped me round. I can't describe it. But I know he is not dead."

Her face was so radiant that Lowry's heart ached for her.

"Joan, don't hope too much; they rarely make mistakes."

She caught at the word. "But they do make them, and you'll see. I am going in half an hour to the War Office. In all those thousands, how can they help making a few mistakes?"

She was what is called "fey." The beauty, the hope, the expectancy of her face made Lowry, for sheer pity, groan under his breath. She did not want his pity. She could even give a momentary thought to his affairs.

"How well you look, John! What have you been doing with yourself?"

"I've been learning to fly"—he fell in with her mood—"and I am an apt pupil, they say. I knew a good bit about it before."

"To fly! It's very dangerous, isn't it?"

"So are most things on land and sea," said Lowry. "In this air game my stiff leg doesn't signify. Danger is what I want, like the rest of 'em—the more the better."

"I'm glad Bernard never learnt to fly," said Joan thoughtfully, smoothing a wrinkle from her glove. "I hope he will not want to learn."

The same certainty sounded in her voice. Lowry gave it up.

"If you do not want me just now, I'll be off. Later in the day I'll come again. You would not care for me to go with you now?"

She shook her head.

"It's good of you, but I won't take up any more of your time. Later, perhaps, I may have news for you. And you'll keep on the alert, too?"

"Of course," agreed Lowry gravely.

Of what use to dishearten her? The worst would be verified soon enough. She looked vividly alive; some inward satisfaction had brought colour to her face and light to her eyes. He went away sad at heart.

Towards evening, as he walked home, he turned as usual into the station to buy an evening paper. A tall young fellow, as tall as himself, with lanky, puttee-covered legs, strolled out to the row of cabs drawn up to the pavement. There was a bandage across his forehead, and he wore his arm in a sling. His long legs took a pace or two to the nearest cab.

Lowry, staring, suddenly recognised him. He dashed up just in time to hear the taxi door banged.

"Here! Wait a minute!" He wrenched it open again and thrust in his head. "Alardyce—young Bernard! Jove! It can't be you!"

"It's me, safe enough. How are you, Lowry? Get in. I'm for home with all speed. Got leave from hospital. Seen—seen my wife lately?"

He spoke with a kind of boyish shyness, as if the term of possession was still new to him.

"This morning," replied Lowry, as the cab started.

"Fairly fit?"

"Very."

"Anxious, of course, like the rest of 'em?"

"Naturally."

"Think she can stand the sight of my battered hulk?"

"I imagine so, considering——"

"Considering what?"

"That a report got about——"

"No! Did it? Joan——"

"She refused to believe it," said Lowry. "For some extraordinary reason, though she saw it in black-and-white, she refused to believe it."

Young Bernard was silent, looking out at the familiar streets, quiet after the strife of battle.

"Think, perhaps, you'd better go ahead and warn her?"

"Perhaps," agreed Lowry.

Here was his wish, ready to be carried out. He knew now how genuine it had been. Young Bernard would be out of action for many a day, hers to tend and rejoice over.

The cab drew up at the house. He could see young Bernard's big left hand shaking on his khaki knee.

Lowry was shown in. Joan sat in the same place, but now her hat was off, and the electric lights were turned on. Their glow shone down on her pretty hair, on all the comfort and warmth of the room. Young Bernard's chair was the other side of the hearth, his silver box of cigarettes on a table beside it.

For one instant, as he looked, envy—bitter envy—wrenched at Lowry's heart, and then he got it under.

Joan stood up to greet him, then waited, lips apart, her eyes, expectant, large, fixed on his face. He held her hand for an instant, then let it go again.

"Joan, you were right this morning—and I was wrong. Here's young Bernard—I'll go and fetch him."

But young Bernard stood on the threshold, tall and lank and eager-eyed. He took a step forward. Lowry heard a subdued sound from Joan, half laugh, half sob, passionately glad.

Lowry went into the hall, closing the door upon them.

Outside, the taxi waited. He stood for a moment looking up at the clearness of the stars, his hands clenched hard. There, in the warmth of that lighted room, love-surrounded young Bernard, while he himself stood in the outer darkness; but for him, too, in the near future lay service for his country, active, dangerous. The woman he loved was happy. What else signified?

He gave directions to the man, and the taxi slid away, leaving the quiet street more silent than before.

OPTICAL INSTRUMENTS FOR THE FRENCH AND ALLIED ARMIES

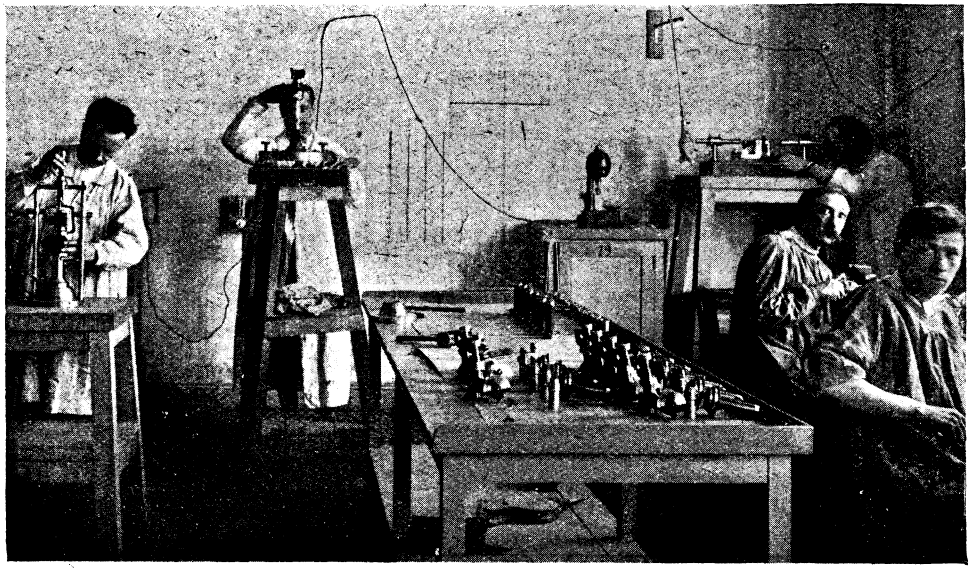
LENSES IN THE MAKING

By BERNARD ST. LAWRENCE

Photographs by Jacques Boyer, Paris.

HAVE we ever fully realised the incalculable service rendered by optical instruments in modern warfare? When we read of various military operations in the field or in the air, or of naval exploits, do we comprehend how closely their success is connected with a skilfully-made lens or prism? Not always, I venture to say. The mechanism of war is indeed complicated, and it is easy to forget one or other of the many parts composing the perfect fighting-machine. We have not ourselves been crystal-gazers, in the sense in which the soldiers are, and therefore we fail to understand the significance of those visions of life and death which are constantly appearing to them in field-glass or periscope.

A distinguished newspaper correspondent, who saw a good deal of fighting in Russia, recently related his experiences to me, and some of the most tragic incidents which came under his notice were observed either through his prismatic binoculars or in the little mirrors of periscopes in front-line trenches or at observation-posts. On one occasion, when at an observation-post, to which he had been guided by an artillery officer, he was instructed to keep his eyes fixed on the mirror of a periscope, the invisible lens of which was directed towards a distant point where the Boches were likely to debouch and cross a stream, and to report events. Soon a large body of the enemy, in a compact mass, came marching along the white road leading out of the village. "Here they are!" he exclaimed. "Good!" replied the officer. "Tell me when they



VERIFICATION OF RANGE-FINDERS FOR ARTILLERY.

reach the bridge." A few seconds later he announced that they were there. "Now watch intently," said the officer. And in the same breath he sent an order through the telephone to the batteries to give those Boches, who were fully a mile away, three rounds of high-explosive shells.

"I shall never forget my sensations as I watched that tragic episode in the little square mirror," explained my friend. "What a vision of havoc and annihilation! Swiftly and silently that big company of men was absolutely blotted out by a series of bursts, each of which raised a column of flame and smoke and earth. My mind's eye completed the picture of bodies, arms, and legs hurled heavenwards. It seemed like magic. There and then I first began to understand the inestimable value of a good optical instrument. Verily our telescopes, binoculars, periscopes, etc., are as necessary in modern warfare as artillery, machine-guns, and rifles. What terrible risks the men in the trenches would run but for these periscopes! Thousands of attacks have been averted by their use; hundreds of thousands of lives have been saved from the bullets of hidden snipers by their adoption. Remember, too, the application of the same instrument to the submarine, the whole efficiency of which rests on lenses and mirrors. Then there are the range-finders used by our artillerymen for estimating the distance of objects to be shot at; the lenses of the projectors which enable us to search the clouds for hidden aeroplanes or Zeppelins; the photographic and telephotographic lenses of our observers, who fly over the enemy trenches and country and bring back those wonderful photographs which enable our expert topographers to map out whole districts within range of the guns. I do not know what we should do in this War if we were deprived of lenses and optical instruments of great power and precision. Return, I suppose, to the methods of the days when men fought with naked weapons."



BREAKING UP THE PLASTER IN WHICH PRISMS ARE SET BEFORE POLISHING.

This subject of optical instruments is of such paramount importance, not only in times of war, but in those of peace, that, before describing how lenses, etc., are made for the use of the Allied armies, I must give a few historical, scientific, and commercial facts to the truth of which our eyes were opened in August, 1914. Both Great Britain and France discovered, when war

broke out, that though we ourselves possessed such eminent opticians as Ross, and though France was the country of Fresnel, Arago, Foucault, Fizeau, Cornu, and other men of genius, Germany was far ahead of us as regards the science of optics and its practical applications. The names of Zeiss, Goerz, Voigtlander, and Steinheil were known throughout the world for the excellence of their microscopic, telescopic, and photographic lenses.

The first-named, Carl Zeiss, had a remarkable career. A poor Saxon workman, he installed a small workshop at Jena, in 1846, for the repairing of the apparatus used at the University in the study of physics. On this modest foundation he gradually built up a powerful business, with branches all over the world—a business which, at the outbreak of war, employed no fewer than two thousand expert workmen, three hundred and eighty ordinary employees, and forty doctors of science. Zeiss himself was never of great scientific attainments, but he knew how to appreciate them in others, and it was largely due to his selection, in 1866, of Professor Abbe, who invented a new method of making lenses, and of Dr. Otto Schott, of Witten, who created numerous varieties of extremely clear glass, known everywhere by the name of the place where it was made (Jena), that his firm attained such a world-wide reputation.

It must not be concluded from this that either England or France was absolutely inactive in this important branch of practical science. Some of the finest lenses and instruments in the world were made by us and our Allies. The range-finders of Barr and Stroud, of Glasgow, were celebrated and used in all navies. Exceedingly pure flint-glass was made in Paris, and likewise the finest large lenses for astronomical purposes. Schott, of the firm of Carl Zeiss, excelled in photographic lenses, but in spite of their great reputation, they were never really any better than the less known lenses of Laurent and his successor, M. Jobin, of the Rue de l'Odéon, Paris. Laurent had the assistance of that great scientist Fizeau, and the lenses his house eventually produced, though they have been equalled by Brashear, of Pittsburg, have never been surpassed.



THE MECHANICAL POLISHING OF SMALL LENSES.

On the outbreak of war a curious and disconcerting fact was discovered by the French and Allied military authorities—that the optical instruments being used by the armies nearly all came from Germany, and were of *inferior quality to those supplied to the German troops*. This discovery was made by comparing the instruments of before August, 1914, with those captured from the enemy.

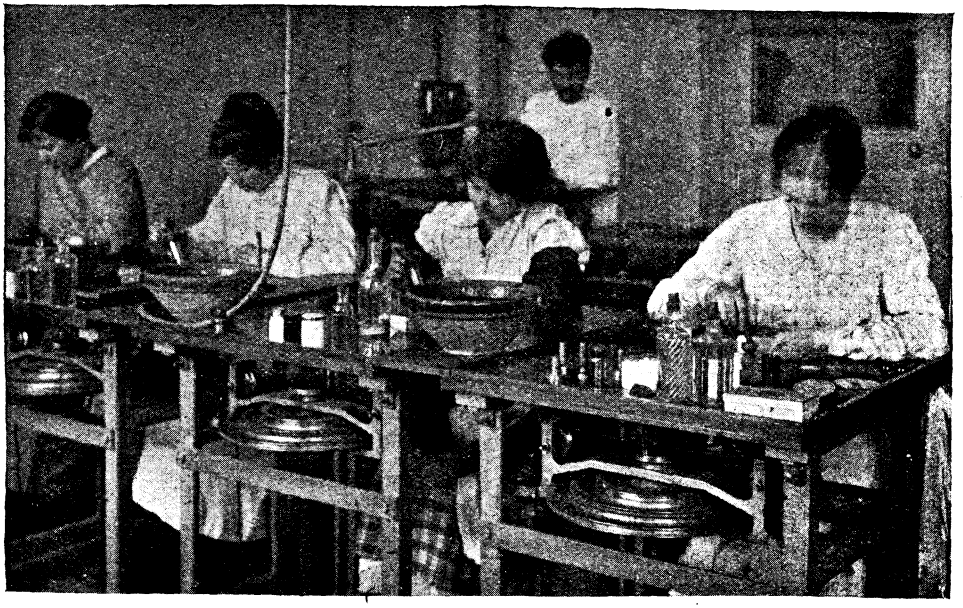
Moreover, we and our Allies were in great need of a large number of prismatic binoculars, photographic lenses, etc., to meet the needs, not only of the existing armies, but also of those to be created. Appeals for the

donation of field-glasses and advertisements offering to purchase lenses of extensive focal length were issued. It soon became evident, however, that this was but a temporary solution of the difficulty, and that in the end the necessary articles must be manufactured in huge quantities. Our friends the French tackled the problem in a masterly manner.

The first thing they had to do was to meet the shortage in optical glass. Thanks to the initiative of M. Henry Le Châtelier, the Society for the Encouragement of National Industry, and the Technical Committee of the Ministry of War, a number of glass manufacturers put their heads together and organised their works according to modern principles, with the result that in a very few months they were able to meet the ever-increasing demands made upon them. Almost at the same time there was founded the Société d'Optique et de Mécanique, on the Boulevard Davoust, Paris. Formerly known as the Société des Établissements Lacour Berthiot, this firm, which is controlled by Messrs. Schneider and Co., the great gun-makers of Creusot, is now one of the largest in the world, and will be able, after the War, to compete successfully with any of the "kolossal" houses on the other side of the Rhine.

At the Société d'Optique et de Mécanique it is possible to see the whole cycle of exceedingly interesting operations which go to the making of all kinds of optical instruments, ranging from the large lenses used in aeroplane work to goniometers, telescopes, prismatic binoculars, range-finders, and periscopes.

Flint, crown, or other glass used in these splendidly-equipped works is either cut into blocks of the desired size by means of rotative saws, or moulded whilst the raw material is in a viscous state. The saws are copper disks armed with small diamonds round their circumferences and rotated electrically. The moulds are approximately the shape and size of the lenses or prisms to be made.



GIRL AND WOMEN APPRENTICES LEARNING TO POLISH SMALL LENSES.

Moulded lenses or prisms are not worked on by the saw; they pass immediately to the roughing-out process. On the other hand, the sheets cut by the saws are rounded by means of pincers before passing to the roughing-out process, which begins with grinding. A number of disks, glued together until they form a long sausage-like roll, are ground simultaneously.

Each disk is then worked on separately by a lapidary's wheel. With one hand the workman presses it on the revolving plate, the profile of which is not unlike the calculated curve of the lens to be made, whilst with the other he sprinkles on the wheel, from time to time, a little wet sand. When found to be of the exact thickness

required, by means of a vertical vernier, the lens is subjected to the action of emery powder, finer and finer as the grinding proceeds, until the finest emery—technically known in France as *douci*—is used. Then comes the polishing process.

The mechanical polishing of the lenses is accomplished by means of automatic machines, the movements of which imitate those of the polishers who formerly did the work entirely by hand. The large isolated lenses or blocks formed of several small lenses are fastened symmetrically to a metal plate by means of a special cement, and mounted on a revolving shaft. An arm commanded by an eccentric wheel passes a polisher—supplied with crocus, a peroxide of iron—transversally over the surface of the lenses to be polished. The workman superintending this ingenious machine can vary the speed both of the revolving shaft and the eccentric. From time to time he removes the upper part of his machine to verify the progress of the work or add a little more polishing power.

Prisms are polished in the same manner as lenses, but in this case they are set in plaster blocks. When the work is completed, they are removed from the plaster by breaking the mass with a wooden mallet. The finishing touches to prisms of large dimensions are done by hand, by very skilful workmen, on what is known as a "German wheel," so called because it originated in Germany. It is worked by two pedals, like a sewing-machine, thus leaving both hands of the polisher free. From time to time he compares the prism he is polishing with a standard one, and, by a method invented by Fizeau, can tell exactly when he has reached the point of scientific perfection.

In forming the various combinations usual in high-class photographic lenses, these, after being carefully cleaned, are fastened together by means of Canada Balsam.

Then comes the mounting of the lenses or prisms, an entirely different branch of work, presided over by specialists whose duty it is to verify the parallelism of surfaces and the accuracy of curves, to adjust the glasses in tubes, and regulate and control their correctness by the aid of most precise instruments.

Such, in brief, are the stages in the evolution of one or other of those marvellous optical instruments which are helping us to win the War. Some of the newer processes inaugurated at the Société d'Optique et de Mécanique cannot yet be described. Suffice it to say that French science has once more taken the lead in practical optics, and that this advance is bound to tell to our advantage in the commercial struggle which will follow the conclusion of peace.



THE FINAL POLISHING OF LENSES FOR PRISMATIC FIELD-GLASSES.

GUARDIANSHIP

By LIEUTENANT RONALD GURNER

Illustrated by Frank Gillett

"YUS, Joe, yer wants yer umbrella—on a night like this."

A stooping form spoke to another grunting and dimly-seen stooping form three yards away, and, having spoken and straightened itself a moment, addressed itself anew to the task of digging, in the almost liquid ground, what should pass as a trench.

"'Ope it turns to mist in the morning! But we shall get it, any'ow," replied Joe Garton.

"Better when they can't see yer, though—yer don't get sniped so much, anyway."

"P'r'aps not; but them there 'eavies of theirs—they smells out trenches wonderful. Take the Aisne last month, now."

"Yus," replied Private Tom Hawkins, during a momentary pause in the howling of the wind. "But they was atop of 'us then, and could see us plain. Now, 'ere we're on a 'ill, the officer says, so it ought to be all right."

"Ye're a queer bird, Tom. Don't nothin' ever depress yer?"

"Well, this ain't exactly a picnic, I knows," the cheery voice replied, "but I'd rather by 'arf 'ave it than the retreat. And there's a farm 'ere just behind us, an' we may get comfortable like, if we stay 'ere."

"Stay 'ere!" repeated Joe Garton in scorn. "And do we ever stay anywhere? First the retreat, then the Aisne, then chucked into bloomin' cattle-trucks agin an' brought up 'ere to this Ypers or Weppres, or whatever they call it, then diggin' an' marchin,' an' marchin' an' diggin,' an' now 'ere we are, an' where that is, 'Eaven knows. Only this evenin', when we was startin' work, Captain 'Eath, 'e took up a map an' said to our officer: 'This is where we are, me boy, the Colonel says; but where this is, you'd better ask 'im yerself.'"

"Well, I suppose it's a bit strange like to 'im at first. But we 'ad to come, an' come quick, what with the Boche takin' Antwerpes, an' advancin' like 'e's doin', an' the Belges fallin' back, an' Calais bein' be'ind us."

Joe looked in his dimly-seen comrade's direction with momentary admiration.

"Yer knows a lot abart it! Who told yer?"

"I asked our officer to-day—like to know what's on, yer know," Tom replied. "Makes it more interestin' like."

"Interestin'!"

"Yes; an' 'e told me more," replied Tom, warming to the subject with this challenge. "Told me a new division was comin' out, an' more artillery, an' that we've got twenty 'cavies already 'ere at Wipers—five whole batteries—an' a 'undred field guns—a'undred, mark yer—all in position now an' ready."

"Garn, 'e was kiddin' yer!" But Joe was impressed by this news, in spite of himself. Twenty heavies and a hundred eighteen-pounders!

"Ought to be all right, if it's true," he remarked, after a moment. "That'll make them think. An' what are we doin' now, then?" he asked. Tom generally knew what he was talking about, and in any case he couldn't very well know less than he himself did.

"'E said we're 'olding Wipers—that place we came through last Thursday—an' 'ave got to somewhere near Jelluvelt, 'e called it, and we're establishin' a line 'ere, and p'r'aps goin' forward a bit later an' shovin' 'em out of Belgium—soon as the new division comes up."

"Don't seem much—just one division."

"But there's more be'ind. There's two hundred thousand trainin' in England alone—said 'e knew fer a fact."

"Strewth! Two 'undred thousand!"

"Yes. Keeps yer interested like, don't it?"

Optimism was justified.

Neither spoke for a little while. It was hard to make oneself heard, and there was much to do. Their lives would probably depend upon this trench of theirs—that they

knew, and Field Service Regulations lay down that a man can dig eighty cubic feet in four hours; but neither Field Service Regulations nor all the wisdom of accumulated military law will tell you what a man will do with a spade in his hand, and the dread of what the morning will bring, and the fear of God in his heart.

"Gettin' lighter, Joe," said Tom, about an hour later.

"Yus; the band'll play soon, I expect!"

* * * * *

The dawn broke red.

"Aye, I said so!"—as the first dull crash was heard away on their right. Others followed in pretty quick succession.

"They're at it now all right. That's the Worcesters coppin' it."

Tom turned and looked at the fountains of earth and black smoke two fields away.

"Good luck to 'em! Glad it ain't us!"

He looked at Joe.

"Yer don't 'arf want a shave, mate!"

"Yus, and yer'll look better yerself when yer've dug yer face art."

Lieutenant Cooper, their platoon commander, appeared.

"Good work here, Garton. If all the line is as good as this, we'll stay here all right."

"Thank 'ee, sir, What's the name o' this 'ere farm, sir?" he asked, after a pause.

"Hill Farm, the brigade calls it. Well, keep warm as well as you can."

But there was little enough of warmth or comfort for the 2nd Battalion Royal Eastshires, or of life itself for many. For the counter-attack that the division and brigade so feared was launched at noon, after three hours' bombardment. In the main it failed, as did the whole mighty German drive; but some advanced parts of the line had to be abandoned, and among these Hill Farm—not lightly, indeed, or without a struggle.

"Yus, there's fifty of the bloomin' battalion left," said Joe to Fred Harding, when the remnants were relieved—"fifty an' two officers!"

His face was drawn with long exposure and mental pain.

"'N' Cooper, 'e's gone, an' Sergeant Friends, an' our little Tom, 'e's gone, too."

"Little Tom?"

"Yus, 'e stuck it there, an' bayonetted two before they got 'im. Saw 'im meself, but couldn't get at 'im, an' then they ordered us back. 'E stuck it, an' they got 'im fair."

"'E was always a good plucked 'un."

"Yus. And now there's fifty of us left! All in a day! 'Ad a Boche division against us alone, I 'eard the sergeant say. I can see 'im standin' there now," he continued inconsequently. "'E died game, did little Tom. 'E was always cheery like; it won't be the same without 'im."

Fred Harding looked at him—noticed that a horny hand was being drawn across his face—and looked quickly away.

"'Twon't ever be the same again," he replied. "Not now—not in our time."

"We'll make 'em pay!" said Joe in sudden savagery.

"Yus, we'll make 'em pay! But it won't ever be the same."

* * * * *

There was no doubt that there was a grain of truth in the Adjutant's remark about Sergeant Garton that he was "inclined to swing it a little." He had reported to the Second Royal Eastshires in the last draft, and was already making a name for himself in the battalion.

"Yes," replied Major Phillips, the second-in-command. "But I always rather sympathise with these Regular fellows; they saw a good deal that we didn't at the beginning, and they must almost be tempted to think of us as intruders at times."

"Like the Boche under present-day conditions," laughed the Colonel. "I think I'll get Darnley to drop him a hint about not talking too much. He's a jolly good man, and it's a pity if he creates a false impression.

"By the way," he continued, "talking of intruding, there's a rumour about that we're going up north very soon. Think it's very likely myself."

"Wipers, eh?" asked Major Phillips.

"Yes. Seems to me they're going to continue all the winter."

"It's the way to do it, anyhow," remarked the Adjutant. "Fancy seeing old Wipers again!"

"Yes, and a lot you'll see of it if we do, my boy. Cloud of smoke in the distance, and a pill-box or two, and mud, and that's about all."

"Mud? I've heard of that. What's it like?" dreamily remarked Lieutenant Sandway, battalion intelligence.

"Little boys——" began the Adjutant. But Sandway was apparently asleep again.

The rumour had already spread in the battalion, and, strangely enough, proved true. Feelings varied. But, whoever was depressed, it certainly was not Sergeant Garton.

"Wipers, is it?" he asked quickly. "Why, when I knew Wipers——" Then he stopped, remembering Captain Darnley's perfectly sound advice.

"Wipers, is it?" he remarked to himself. "Tom died there—Tom an' them. Glad we're goin' there; p'r'aps the Boche'll do a little payin' this time."

"They told me at the dump this morning there's near on three thousand guns in the salient now," said the quartermaster-sergeant that evening, "and 'Eaven knows 'ow many army corps."

"Twenty heavies and a hundred field guns!" A forgotten scrap of conversation flashed into Sergeant Garton's mind apparently from nowhere. But again he held his peace.

The others appreciated his silence.

"We 'eld it with fewer than that, Garton, didn't we?" said the battalion sergeant-major.

"Aye, 'twere different then."

And a few days after, to his joy, Sergeant Garton found himself marching through streets that he remembered well. He looked at the fallen water tower, the ruined prison, the pitted ramparts, the stagnant canal.

"Top dog now!" he muttered.

"What's that we 'ave at Church parade? 'For mine eyes 'ave seen Thy salvation.'"

Guns roared incessantly from the city, the fields in front of Elverdinghe, the Menin Road.

"Don't they never stop now, sir?" he asked Lieutenant Watson.

"No, I believe not. Why should they?"

Why indeed? And a curious look of triumph came into Sergeant Garton's eyes.

"Aye, go it!" he muttered, as he watched a giant howitzer belch its thunders and belch again.

Then he said a strange thing—

"We're a-comin', Tom—a-comin' at last!"

"Pick up the step, there," said Lieutenant Watson.

"Sorry, sir—my fault." And Sergeant Garton flushed.

So that day they marched, and rested the night in sodden fields. Then on and on the following afternoon, through fields of mud and water, a journey interminable, to all appearance.

Lieutenant Watson explained as they marched. "The —— Brigade is attacking this evening, and we relieve them at four a.m. in their new positions. They expect to win eight hundred yards."

It was hard to tell from the sound when the attack took place. A slight increase in volume, and that was all. But the battalion knew by many signs when its objective was reached.

Lieutenant Watson threaded his way through dead bodies.

"This is our little job, Sergeant Garton," he said—"to garrison this place."

He pointed to a few bricks and a mass of shell-holes.

"This is a farm, you may care to know—Hill Farm."

"Eh, sir, what's that?" Sergeant Garton asked quickly.

"Hill Farm. Why?"

"Nothing, sir; but I think I've been here before. Is there a place called Jelly-veld anywhere near?"

"Yes, just over there. Well, we must make it as strong as possible; they may counter-attack, as this ridge is important."

"'Eaven 'elp 'em if they do! 'Eaven 'elp 'em!" Sergeant Garton's voice was tense and strange.

"Why? What do you mean?"

"Nothing, sir; but they attacked 'ere before."

"Then you do know this place?"

"Yes, sir. You leave it to me, sir; I've been 'ere before."

The dawn broke red. With a grim smile Sergeant Garton watched the breaking.

* * * * *

"D.C.M. certainly," said the Brigadier to Colonel Fairgrieve, two days later, "it's almost a V.C. job. Don't think I've ever heard of a finer performance."

"No; I suppose he realised what depended on it. But even that doesn't quite explain it. And he couldn't very well know that, if we lost Hill Farm, the whole division would have to retire. It's very curious."

"What?"

"The whole thing, sir. Apparently, when Watson was killed, and he took charge, he seemed to know exactly what to do. And Private Johnson, the only other survivor, says that, all the time they were attacking, he kept on saying, 'Come on, you—— You don't get Tom—not this time!' sticking them and bombing them, and holding on even after the Lewis gun was knocked out, and saying, 'It's all right, Tom—they won't get yer!' Baker and I found him that evening covered in blood and pretty badly wounded, looking like a mad man. As soon as he saw us, he said: 'They didn't get Tom, not this time, nor they won't, neither, the——' The bodies



"'They didn't get Tom, not this time,

were all round him. Twenty-three we counted afterwards. I said 'Well done!' as I was helping to get him away. And his last words were: 'Thank God, Tom, they didn't get yer!'"

"Who's Tom?"

"That's just what nobody seems to know."

"Blest if I don't go and see him!" said General Fielding. "He's still in C.C.S., isn't he?"

"Yes; they can't move him yet. I'd like to come with you."

"We'll go to-morrow evening, after the brigade is relieved. I'd like to get to the bottom of it."

* * * * *

"Friends of yours to see you, Sergeant," said the R.A.M.C. orderly. "Three friends to see you—a captain, a colonel, and a general!"

To tell him that he was lying was an



nor they won't, neither, the——'"

unnecessary waste of breath, and poor Garton had little enough to waste. So he lay still.

"This is the fellow, is it?" said General Fielding. And he shook hands silently. "No, don't move"—as Garton tried in vain to rise in bed.

"Finest thing I've heard of, my man. You saved the whole situation, by Jove! Credit to the battalion and the brigade and the whole division."

Garton would wake up soon, he knew. It seemed a pity that this dream should stop. Perhaps, if he didn't speak, it would go on. He remained silent.

The General came nearer.

"Now, tell me," he said, "who is Tom?"

"Tom!"—and recollection began to return.

Garton glanced at the Captain.

"He didn't want me to talk much about what happened before, sir. Captain Darnley,

'e said fellers wouldn't understand it. Yer don't mind if I tell yer?"

The General and Colonel look puzzled. Captain Darnley felt half ashamed.

"I remember now," he said. "He means that business about lead swinging, as we called it, you remember?"

The Colonel nodded.

"No, please, tell me," said General Fielding.

"There ain't really nothin' to tell, sir. Tom, 'e were a friend of mine in the second battalion, an' we was there in November, '14, an' 'e was killed there, an' I couldn't save 'im."

Garton paused for breath.

"There were only fifty left, sir, after their attack. An' Tom, he died game. I can see 'im now—I ain't never forgotten, but I didn't like to talk. They was more than we was then, sir, yer see."

General Fielding nodded and smiled a little grimly. He, too, remembered well enough.

"An' now we're stronger. An' we got there, an' I couldn't let 'em get at Tom again. I kep' on seein' 'im there, standin' just be'ind me. 'E was a good plucked 'un, sir. I can see 'im now."

Some instinct made the General say the right thing.

"Well, they didn't get him, thanks to you, my boy. They'll never get him now."

"Thank'ee, sir."

"And you saved the whole situation, they tell me."

"Thank'ee, sir. But I'm glad they didn't get 'im. They tried 'ard."

"Yes, but he had a good friend, you see, like you have, I hope, always now."

And General and Sergeant shook hands.

"They didn't get yer, Tom, thank God!" muttered Garton half an hour later. "The General, 'e said so—them Generals always knows."

GLENGIRNOC.

AH, wae's me for Glengirnoc, where the bonnie burnie rins,
Where wave the silver birches 'mid the gowd upo' the whins,
With gnarled Scots firs shadowing aneth the purple hills,
An' the mountain air's a tonic for the warst o' human ills.

Oh, I could spend a lifetime there, an' spend it brawly weel,
For there's mair o' God 'n a yaird o't than there is o' ony deil.
Dra' in yer breath an' oot again, ye'll scent the heather honey—
A God-gi'en draucht that's worth a heap o' trash that folks ca' "money."

Tae sit an' dream the river by, great thochts come quick an' faist—
The gorse, the trees, the dronin' bees—oh, gin 'twould only laist!
'Tis but a dream that passes wi' the fleetin' simmer day,
A dream that paints the lily, yet a dream that pynts the way.

I've never left thet bonnie glen bit I had cleaner thocht;
It seemed like wonder magic by a great magician wrocht.
I better thocht o' mankind, an' they better thocht o' me,
For auld Glengirnoc helpit me a finer weird tae dree.

J. L. DICKIE.

STRONGER THAN WAR

By CHARLES INGE

Illustrated by N. Tenison-Cuneo

IN the two rows of that long hospital hut, with its faint odour of medicinal cleanliness, he was, as it were, a gap. In the ordered record of classification he remained, after two days, an hiatus. The chart above his bed contained no name, no description; it was unlikely that it would ever be more than a nameless record. Yet, more than all the rest, he brought to that haven of quiet an echo of the din and welter of the field; by the very mystery of his condition he linked the cleanliness of the ward with the filth and corruption of the trenches.

For the sacrilege of modern high-explosive, having mutilated him, had stripped him naked as he was born, and, with a cruelty almost Prussian in its apeishness, had deprived him at once of memory and speech. But for his eyes and the odd continual movement of his fingers, he was a mere bit of unclaimed wreckage, though the protective cage gave the bed-clothes a concealing contour.

He had been found by the English, when casualties happened to be small, which was the reason he was still alive.

For all his plight, it was the spiritual pain of unuttered things that stabbed the suffering in his eyes with an eternal impotent questioning. He looked to have so much to ask and yet was dumb, while the fingers of his left hand kept accompaniment—not the mere drubbing and scrabbling of overtaxed endurance, more the rhythmical movement of one remembering a tune.

The Officer-in-charge remarked on it to the Sister, after the little pause for thought which always followed his final instructions at the door—

"Odd, that movement of the fingers—Cot Fourteen. I've not seen that before."

"It's been like that ever since he regained consciousness."

"Odd. French, of course, with that high forehead. Marvellous vitality, but a couple of days at the most——"

"Yes." The Sister acquiesced with momentary weariness. Those continual little processions through the hut door always left her with a sick ache of compassion; and here was the added tragedy of nameless oblivion.

"And I'll try to get to the concert," the Colonel was saying with sudden briskness. "To-morrow, isn't it?"

"Please."

"I'll try. And try him—Cot Fourteen—with associations—languages, pictures, uniforms. Someone will be the better for knowing, if we can find out. Morning, Sister."

Until he reached the next hut door, she stood thinking of Cot Fourteen—of those who would wait for news in vain; of the effect on her own small circle in England, were she to disappear beneath the wave of War as absolutely as he must unless he spoke. If only he could even remember! Then her duties pulled her back. She was the Sister of veritable Mercy once more, without sign of anything but cheerfulness and smiles.

All that afternoon at intervals they tried him, deliberately, with picture papers, with badges, with greetings in foreign tongues. They put their souls into their inquiries. The dumb message of his eyes only got more intense. They enlisted the assistance of the patients, and tried him with jests in slang and *patois*. The ward became part pageant, part bazaar, as they produced stray orderlies and chance officers passing by, and oddments of uniform and equipment, raked from the pitiful dumps of the hospital storerooms. Each new effort became a new hope. He realised them all; and his eyes took on the pathetic concentration of a precocious child straining to recollect something beyond its capacity, and fearful of failure. The struggle sent one nurse away for shame of her emotion.

They tried again and yet again, until the squeezed interrogation of his eyes hurt with its very impotence. And then at last they had to give it up, because he cried from beneath eyelids closed to signify his defeat.

They tried him again next morning, because of the little signals that warned them to be quick; but they tried him differently, disguising their attempts. Even a party of black-coated delegates, on a visit of inspection, was impressed into service. The result was nothing.

By the afternoon they only watched him for the ebbing of the tide.

The rest of the ward was a-bustle. They who could go and those who could be taken were being got ready for the concert. To some it would be an ordeal beyond their strength, but the jokes and the anticipations kept them up. More than once the nurses had to check the hubbub. Very soon it broke out again over curiously incongruous things—the disabilities of their wounds and bandages. It was the sordid aftermath of war made wonderful by incorrigible light-heartedness.

Into it all came a visitor, timidly, who had lost her way. No one heeded her. She stood murmuring about the concert—a small Frenchwoman—svelte in black, but for some mauve fluffiness about her throat, her face all deprecatory apologies for the intrusion, which quickly changed to awed wonder at the scene.

The uproar had reached a higher note. One man with a swathed foot had over-hopped himself in reaching for his shoe.

It was just then that something happened at Cot Fourteen—a veritable upheaval, as if he, in spite of his helplessness, would fling the bed-clothes from him and spring out. The man was galvanised by some great emotion. It ended in a commotion of the arms.

The little Frenchwoman looked and straightway went across, drawn by the imperious motion of his head. His hands reached out for it as she came, so that she put it into them, as if he had asked for it in words—the case which she carried.

One or two had noticed by now, and watched. But the strange drama was still almost an aside to the hilarity at the other end of the hut.

The man was working feverishly, wolfishly, at the clasps of the case. So clumsy was he in his eagerness that she made offer to help him with murmured sympathy. He almost snarled at her, like some animal threatened with interruption of a meal. At last he got it out—the violin—and motioned her to put the empty case at the foot of his bed.

Another outburst from the other end of the hut made him frown, otherwise he was absorbed—someone thinking in a different plane to his surroundings.

The violin was under his chin, the fingers of his left hand caressed the strings. Then he looked up, around, consciously masterful.

The hubbub still continued.

He frowned again, the frown of one accustomed to attention. He reached forward and with the back of the bow beat thrice upon the empty case—three distinct commands. It was the action of the master.

Somehow, as if by a magnetism of the strokes, silence came over the ward—an arrested silence of poised action and turned faces. The noise had stopped as if cut off by a switch.

Again he looked around, his eyes alight. The man had been resurrected. The aching question had disappeared. In the pose of his great head and the power of his look his plight was almost forgotten.

Then he began—lying there—to play.

He played falteringly at first, like an old man on the kerb, but stronger gradually, as the will overcame the physical weakness. Slowly the quivering notes took on strength and resonance, as the bow travelled in long-drawn sweeps, and the strings, once met, seemed loath to part, and gave out their plaintive protest in melody.

Everybody was listening now, watching the strange exhibition of recovered power, seeing in the transfigured face the look of him who has found heart's ease after stress.

The music changed to still deeper melancholy of cadences; notes vibrated and reverberated through the hut—notes that seemed to search out and pull at the heart-strings of the listening groups.

Men sat down suddenly. A nurse's eyes blinked.

Still the music—the deep, long notes swelling upwards and dying away, only to gain greater tone and power with the next upward soar. The thing he played had taken on a meaning—a definite message. Each one, listening, heard it. It was an old tune, or they thought it was an old tune, they heard—the mother-tune of all tunes, reminding them of home, of boyhood and innocence, and the dim visions of childhood's wonder.

Someone coughed nervously. Those around stirred with a ripple of irritation, but no

one turned. The man afflicted bit upon his sleeve.

And then into this melody of memories crept something of a glory—faintly at first, as of the dawn creeping upwards from the night. The pace quickened; the melody swelled.

The little Frenchwoman's rapt attention seemed to check. Not that she moved, but the gentle motion of her head, as of one who marks remembered passages, stopped at once. She frowned as if at fault—poised to a greater concentration of listening, and her eyes turned questioning to the player's face.

His eyes were wide and gleaming. The notes were rising and rising, quicker and quicker. His shoulders swayed a little, even as he lay propped against the pillows, with the effort of production. They who watched him said afterwards that his face was the face of a conqueror. The notes seemed thrown out into the room, chasing each other, vibration upon vibration, until the very air throbbed with sound. He was reaching the culminating diapason of the finale, great sweeping echoes of proud music, as of the eternal victory of spirit over pain. It was the end.

The last notes came—high, sustained, triumphant—and stopped. The great reverberations sounded and died away. The room was fiercely still.

Before the inevitable reaction, while still the faint echoes seemed to circle round,



"Then he began—lying there—to play."

and the watching groups still stared, the little Frenchwoman had spoken, too moved for thanks—

"But that—that first was Dufresne! Hugo Dufresne! His *Intermezzo!*"

At once the great head lifted from the violin. The eyes looked at her and then around, and then beyond the fascinated faces, as slowly an odd, uncertain expectancy came into them—half question, half recognition. Then the miracle came, with a little indrawing of breath—

"But I am Dufresne," his voice said, almost surprised, "and that last was——"

The woman's little cry of enthusiasm was choked in its beginnings. The general stir was checked. The nurse scrambled forward just in time to support the drooping head. The violin slipped and clattered to the floor.

"Hugo Dufresne!" he whispered. "His *Magnificat.*"

* * * * *

"Shouldn't wonder if he pulled through," said the Colonel, when they told him the next day. "Odd thing, the artist's joy in his work."

Three weeks later a stubby English soldier, making bedside overtures, expressed it differently—

"Fritz done you in proper, mate. But you beat him with the old fiddle, eh?"

The other smiled. One arm dropped towards the floor, and he felt to touch the violin case left by the little Frenchwoman as a thankoffering on the day of his resurrection. Having touched it, he made answer falteringly in English—

"Why, yes; but I have yet the hands. What matters?"

BALLADE.

THIS is the season when the summer airs,
That even touch this stony-hearted land,
Most turn the mind towards its old despairs,
That far away the Wye makes golden sand,
Where, under Chepstow, it breaks into waves
Of rippling joy, despite the castled frown
That holds the craggy rocks the river laves,
Beyond the Severn where the sun goes down.

Far, far away the simple country fairs,
Where men who seek new masters idly stand,
To watch the merchant sell his magic wares—
Dragon-tooth philtres, drugs of nameless brand,
That keep the wise for ever from the graves
Which yawn for those who will not pay their crown
To purchase here the only draught that saves,
Beyond the Severn where the sun goes down.

In that dim land the banished pixie dares
Return at night to help with nimble hand
The busy housewife, to release from snares
Rabbits that run into the cunning strand,
To lull the stars to sleep with dreamy staves,
To catch faint meteors lest in brooks they drown,
To hide away the rainbows in their caves,
Beyond the Severn where the sun goes down.

Prince, in that land no moonbeam vainly craves
To deck in silver garb some sleeping town,
And dying light each street with gold-dust paves
Beyond the Severn where the sun goes down.

OSCAR LLOYD.

A BIT SOFT-HEARTED

By HUMPHREY PURCELL

Illustrated by Arthur Garratt

WILLIAM SNAITH—he hated to be called Bill—had been loitering near "Holme Lea" for three or four minutes. The hour was midnight, and the road practically deserted. The moon was bright, the air crisp and clear, the wind barely noticeable.

In the distance a steady but hasty footstep approached, and a man's voice called out from time to time. The rattle of a suburban tram grew louder from the opposite direction. William stepped into the shade of a heavy gatepost, four or five doors from "Holme Lea," and waited.

The tram swayed past noisily, and William noticed that it was unlighted. The man's voice, nearer than before, called out again, and the words became recognisable: "Take cover!" In intervals of shouting he blew a whistle.

William—it were useless to conceal it—was by profession a burglar. He had been a burglar for several years. His presence in Dulham and his interest in "Holme Lea" were purely professional. As a burglar he had learned that "nerves" are half imagination and half indigestion, and air-raids troubled him little; but this warning, after a week's careful study of the structure and domestic arrangements of "Holme Lea," annoyed him.

It seemed evident that his night's work would have to be postponed, but once the road was quiet again, he strolled past the house of his affections for a final glance. As he came alongside, the front door opened, and a middle-aged gentleman, in pyjamas and dressing-gown, walked to the gate.

The gentleman's name, William was already aware, was Joseph Charrington. He was a provision broker, with an income of about three thousand pounds a year, a teetotaler, a Sunday-school superintendent, a sergeant of Volunteers, a golfer, and a widower. He lived alone except for two women servants, went to bed regularly at half-past ten, slept well, and did not possess firearms.

"Was that a warning?" the pyjamaed gentleman asked, as William passed.

"Yes, sir," William replied. "Just the night for them, too."

While they were speaking, the barrage gunfire commenced in the distance, like the beating of heavy carpets, and now and again a bursting shell winked over the roofs of the houses opposite.

"It will be safer inside," said Mr. Charrington. "Would you care to shelter with me? It is an old-fashioned house, and pretty strong."

William accepted. The suggestion struck him as distinctly promising.

"Wait inside just a minute," Mr. Charrington said. "My neighbours may like to join us. Their house is more modern, and the time passes better when there are several people together."

The neighbours had evidently been invited beforehand. They returned with Mr. Charrington almost immediately—father, mother, two children, and a maid—and all followed their host down to the basement kitchen. The two servants were there already; the window had been shuttered, and the fire reawakened.

"If you'll put the kettle on for coffee, Mrs. Porter," Mr. Charrington said to his housekeeper, "I'll get some rugs and a pack of cards, and——"

The distant tapping of the guns suddenly gave way to the thunder of a closer bombardment. Shot followed shot rapidly, and

shells whistled through the air continuously for perhaps fifty seconds.

"They've brought more guns round here lately," said the neighbour, during a lull.

"Evidently," said Mr. Charrington. "I notice you hadn't gone to bed, Franklin."

"No. As a matter of fact, my wife and I were in the middle of quite an exciting discussion when—— Good Heavens! Elsie, did you lock up after you?"

"Yes, dear," Mrs. Franklin answered, "and I brought the keys with me." She handed two keys to her husband. He put them in his pocket, remarking how strange it is that one's memory should go to pieces so easily at such times.

The nearer guns ceased altogether at last, and the little party sat near the fire, playing round card games and chatting. William explained that he had been to see a pal who had been wounded, but who had only just been discharged from hospital with an artificial leg; and after that they treated him as one of themselves. The children made friends with him quickly; they liked his accent.

The noise of the guns gradually diminished, until only a tap-tapping, that might have been anywhere, was left. William looked at his watch; it was a quarter to one.

"If you'll excuse me, lydies and gents," he said, "I'll be moving. I got to go to Mile End, and I reckon I'll 'ave to walk most of it."

"Won't you wait for the 'All clear'?" Mr. Charrington urged.

"No, thanks. If it gets 'eavy again, I'll dodge into some doorwye. Don't you trouble to come up, sir."

But Mr. Charrington insisted, and accompanied him to the front door.

Once in the street again, William turned briskly Citywards, until he heard Mr. Charrington's door close; then he retraced his steps to his former shelter behind the heavy gatepost, where he waited inconspicuously for perhaps ten minutes. As he had hoped, the firing became heavier again; the local guns sent shells whistling overhead once more, and the din was even greater than previously.

William was pleased. He left the gatepost, walked about thirty yards further away from town, entered the gateway of the neat detached villa adjoining Mr. Charrington's house, and walked up to the porch.

"One of 'em 'ud be the front door key," he told himself, as he inserted the end of his jemmy between the door and the doorpost, "and the other was large enough, too—some other door, I bet."

He was inside now. The hall lamp was unlit, but a streak of light showed along the floor on the right. He bolted the front door, found the handle of the door of the lighted room, and turned it. The door was locked, but the jemmy again gained him admittance.

The room was lighted by a chintz-shaded electric lamp; a fire still glowed warmly in the grate, and the two easy-chairs were drawn up to the table. On the table, in front of the lamp, a small, green cloth had been unspread, and on the cloth lay half a dozen diamond rings, three or four necklaces, and several bracelets and bracelet-watches.

William stood with his hands on the table-edge in amazement; then, with a chuckle, he took up one of the necklaces and examined it. "Worf thirty quid," he estimated, and in five seconds the green cloth, with the jewellery folded within, was inside his breast-pocket.

From force of habit he glanced round the room before leaving it. On the mantelpiece was a money-box, which weighed heavy and rang of silver, but William replaced it.

"Them kiddies 'as about enough to worry them to-night," he observed. For William's profession had never been able to kill in him that little streak of sentiment that each of us cherishes and hides.

Once in the porch again William became aware that the gunfire had not abated during his few minutes inside the house. As he stood there, something—probably a shell fragment—hit the gravel of the path. He drew back into the hall and in the darkness leaned against a wall. Suddenly a roar, like that of an express tearing wildly through a railway station, obliterated the barking of the guns. A deafening explosion shook the house, shattering windows and bursting open doors, and flung William face downwards on the carpeted floor.

That kind of thing was no new experience for William, and, once he realised that he was unhurt, his senses rallied and warned him that, with his pocket bulging as it was, the Franklins' house was no place for him.

When he reached the street, figures were already hurrying from either direction; a police whistle sounded startlingly near. He stopped only to satisfy his curiosity as to where the bomb had fallen.

It had hit Mr. Charrington's house.

William hesitated for a moment, and

thought of the kindly provision merchant, the nervous women, and the frightened kiddies. Then he ran towards the cloud of smoke and dust where, half an hour before, he had been sheltering.

and half burying some of those who were sheltering.

He led the way to the kitchen. One of the children ran to meet him. "Oh, I'm glad you've come back!" she said.



"It's you I want.'"

Mr. Charrington came hurrying out of the door as he reached it.

"Run for the police and an ambulance!" he shouted. But "specials" were already at the gate.

William was the coolest person there. He learned that the bomb had not reached the kitchen, but that a wall had fallen, injuring

For ten minutes he worked feverishly, the others merely assisting him, to clear away the fallen bricks and release the sufferers. Thoughtlessly he used his jemmy, and it was the most useful tool they had; but no one recognised it, and when he realised his foolishness he buried it beneath a heap of rubbish.

The bomb had struck a corner of the house away from the kitchen, and although cuts and bruises were general, and one of the maids was hysterical, Mr. Franklin's broken leg was the only injury calling for the ambulance.

William and Mr. Charrington carried him upstairs.

"Charrington," Franklin asked, as they went to the ambulance, "was my house damaged?"

"Nothing much. Glass and doors, I suppose, but that's all. It looks all right."

"Thank Heaven! Charrington, go in as soon as you can. Take the keys out of this pocket. Get what's lying on the dining-room table, and look after it for me. It's not insured, old man, and if I lost it——"

"Yes, yes, I know," said Mr. Charrington soothingly.

"No, you don't know," Franklin insisted. "If I lost it, I'd be ruined, Charrington. I'll explain some other time. But it means—everything!"

He talked haltingly, for the pain of his leg must have been great, but William knew that there was deep concern behind his request.

And suddenly it came to William that, if it had not been for that jewellery, he might have been in Franklin's place—lying in a police ambulance, with his pockets full of housebreaking tools. The thought made him very serious, and very sorry for the sufferer. The glimmering of sentiment that had saved the children's money-box got to work on their father's diamonds.

Charrington stayed to talk to Franklin while the driver took his seat and the attendant made the patient comfortable. William vanished, and, racing noiselessly on his rubber heels, reached Franklin's house.

The dining-room door had swung to again, and the hall was in darkness. A chair that had fallen out of its place caught William's foot, and he fell. He scrambled to his feet and hurried into the dining-room, but as he did so he heard running footsteps on the gravel outside.

It was useless to try to escape, and there was nowhere to hide. Charrington, still mindful of the guns and of the shells that, having gone up, must come down, was in a hurry. While William stood listening, he reached the room.

Panting with exertion, he glanced at the table and then at William.

"So you," he puffed, with gleaming eyes, "got here first. And this is your gratitude——"

"Look 'ere," said William, "no speeches. Never mind wot I'm 'ere for. 'Ere's wot you want."

He held out the folded cloth, but Charrington refused it with a wave of the hand.

"No," he said, advancing towards William, "it's you I want. A man who could stoop——"

"No speeches, I told you," William snapped. "'Ere!"

He seized Mr. Charrington's coat with the intention of pushing the package into one of his pockets, but Mr. Charrington struggled.

"What the devil," he shouted—"what do you mean? Place that package on the table, and consider yourself under arrest."

"Well, if you won't listen to reason," William said, coolly stepping back a pace, "I'll 'ave to be brutal."

His fist caught Mr. Charrington's jaw accurately and forcefully. Mr. Charrington fell on the rug, and William, bending over him, pushed the cloth with its costly contents into a trouser pocket.

A minute later he was again in the garden of Mr. Charrington's house. A policeman was standing just inside the doorway.

"There's a bloke been 'urt in the 'ouse next door," said William. "You'd better send a man to look after 'im. 'E seems a bit barmy to me."

Then he started his tramp homewards.

VESPERS.

A TIRELESS lark is singing,
His endless joy upwinging,
And the long day i' the glory
Of that anthem closes.
The sun that seeks the West
Is ushered to his rest,
To waken to larks singing
At dawn's roses.

HENRY SIMPSON.



"FREE LIST" NOT WANTED.

"I AM singing at a concert for wounded soldiers to-morrow night, Jane. Here is a ticket, if you'd like to go."

"Sorry, miss. I can't go ter-morrow—it's my night off."

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

AN UNNECESSARY STORY.

By W. J. Clarke.

THE first time she met him somebody told her his name. This was unnecessary, for she didn't care whether he had a name or not. At the same time he was told her name, which was unnecessary, for he didn't care what her name was. He cared so little for her name that, a few months later, he suggested that she should give up using it and use his name instead.

They were in the habit of sitting together in the same chair, which was unnecessary, when there were several empty chairs in the room. He put one of his arms round her waist, which was unnecessary, for she was in no danger of falling out of the chair; and she held his other hand, which was unnecessary, because he had no intention of running away. They spoke in whispers, which was unnecessary, for there was no one else in the room to be disturbed if they spoke aloud. And what they said was unnecessary, anyhow, for they had said it all before, dozens of times.

She was sufficiently good-looking to make it unnecessary for her to be gorgeously attired on their wedding-day. He was plain, and there was no necessity for him to be made worse by the hideous clothes that a man is expected to wear on such occasions. They went for a honeymoon to a place that is renowned far and wide for its beautiful scenery. As they never looked at anything except each other, the expense of the railway tickets was unnecessary.

There was no necessity for the people who called on them a year later to tell them that the baby was the cutest and sweetest little angel in the world; they knew it without being told. The other remark, that the baby was exactly like his father, or his mother—whichever happened to be present at the time—was untrue, and therefore needless. If the visitors had said that the baby looked like a dumpling, and not much of a dumpling, either, it would have been true, and therefore useful, but nobody said it.

The stories she told their two youngsters, a few years later, about a white-haired and jovial person who drove a reindeer-team, and gave presents to all the little boys and girls who were good (she forgot to add, and whose parents were well-to-do), but gave nothing to the little boys and girls who were naughty (and whose parents were poor—she forgot this, too), were superfluous, for their sharp eyes had already noticed the brown paper packages on the top of the cupboard in the back room.

They would have found it difficult to give a reason for making the little girl spend so many hours at the piano, when it was quite clear that

she had no ear for music, and still more difficult to say why they taught the little boy to be honest and truthful, when they knew he was going to be a lawyer, later on, like his father.

It was quite unnecessary that the father should always have been in such a desperate hurry. It was simply a bad habit he had picked up. He had quite enough business to fill the day, even if he had done it in a leisurely fashion. By being always in a hurry, he found it necessary to work early and late, in order to get through, and, as he had no time for meals, his health suffered considerably.

Another unnecessary thing was the trouble she took over her social receptions. The people who came didn't want to see her, and she didn't want to see them—there was happiness on both sides when the time came for parting. And her diamonds were not necessary. Diamonds never are. If a person is rich, glass answers every purpose, for everybody believes it to be the genuine thing; and if a person is not rich, real diamonds are taken to be glass. So glass is just as good in either case.

The amount of hard work her husband did was as unnecessary as her diamonds. He made plenty of money, but he didn't really want it, nor did his family. The only good thing about it was that striving for it killed him while he was still a young man, and saved him many years' hard labour, striving for more.

The grief the newspapers professed to feel at the loss the community had suffered was the most unnecessary thing of all.

The moral of this story is that some things that appear to be unnecessary are of great importance, while some things that have the reputation of being important are really unnecessary. But, as everybody has a different opinion as to which is which, the moral appears to be as unnecessary as the story.

A SMALL boy had been sent on an errand to the home of a neighbour. He returned with the alarming news that the neighbour was going blind.



IRISH.

NEW LANCE-CORPORAL: Now, then, you six, stand in line there! I want ter count yer.

"What makes you think that?" his father asked.

"The way he talked," said Willie. "When I went into the room where he wanted to see me, he said: 'Boy, where is your hat?' And there it was on my head all the time!"

A WELL-KNOWN lawyer had just won a famous case, and the next day the opposing lawyer met him and said—

"Is there any case so low, or any man so mean, that you wouldn't take his case for a fee?"

"Well," said the other, "I don't know. What have you been doing?"



AS IT COMES.

SHE: Elsie says you adore good music.
HE: Oh, that doesn't matter at all. Pray go on.



VERY NEARLY.

VISITOR: So this is your idea of an air raid! It must be almost as bad as you've painted it.

THE JOYS OF BEING RATIONED.

At the prospect of rations some people are sad,
When they really should be most unspeakably glad;
Just think of the freedom from worry and strain,
And the rest which they bring to the mind and the brain!

Once we puzzled our heads as we strove to arrange
The sort of a joint we'd have for a change.
At dinner this subject embittered man's life:
"What! Mutton *again?*" he would shout at his wife.

But now we are spared all this fussing and fret,
And thankfully feed on whatever we get;
We hand in our vouchers, and don't care a fig
If it's beef, lamb, or mutton, veal, venison, or pig.

And once upon butter opinions would halt
Between Dorset and Devon, fresh, Irish, and salt;
Now our views on the subject we've ceased to enlarge,
And rejoice if we capture a quarter of "Marge."

R. H. Roberts.

GENERAL PERSHING tells a story about a young American soldier. "On the voyage over," said the General, "he talked a lot of the sight-seeing he would do when on leave.

"'Don't miss Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris,' said a Frenchman.

"'You bet I won't,' said he.

"'Don't miss Westminster Abbey in London,' said a Scot.

"'No, sir-ree. But say, fellows,' the young soldier declared, 'the thing I'm craziest of all to see is the Church of England.'"



MORE SUITABLE.

"I SHALL have to see the M.O. I eat like an ostrich, drink like a fish, sleep like a dormouse, and yet feel as tired as a dog."

"You don't want the M.O. You want a vet."



THE NEW REPROACH.

"GIVE's a bun, Billy."
"Won't!"
"Give's a bite o' one, then."
"Shan't!"
"Garn! Food 'oarder!"

"WHAT is your highest ambition in life?" said a woman visitor of the soulful kind to a famous inventor one day.

"I'll tell you if you won't tell anyone," replied the inventor.

"I certainly promise," was the quick reply, eager to be the holder of such a secret.

"Well," said he, "I want to throw an egg into that electric fan."

A CLUBMAN tells of a young friend of his—a very methodical youth recently graduated from a Northern university—who, upon setting up his own establishment, undertook to look after his own domestic affairs.

"As an evidence of his orderly nature," says the clubman, "I offer this. Desiring to mark his laundry for purposes of identification, he inscribed his name on one piece and marked the others 'ditto.'"

MISSING her two-year-old, the mother went to look for him, and found the youngster in the kitchen on the floor by the coal-scuttle, carefully wiping a piece of coal with his little white handkerchief.

"Cleanin' toal, mamma," he explained.

"Why, sonny, come away from there! You can't clean coal."

"Yes, mamma. See?" — showing the blackened handkerchief. "All comin' off—all black comin' off!"

THE AUGUST WINDSOR

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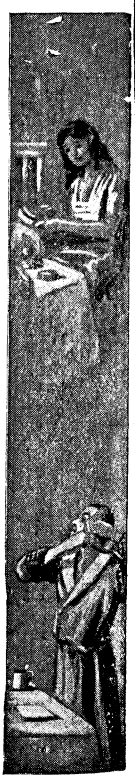
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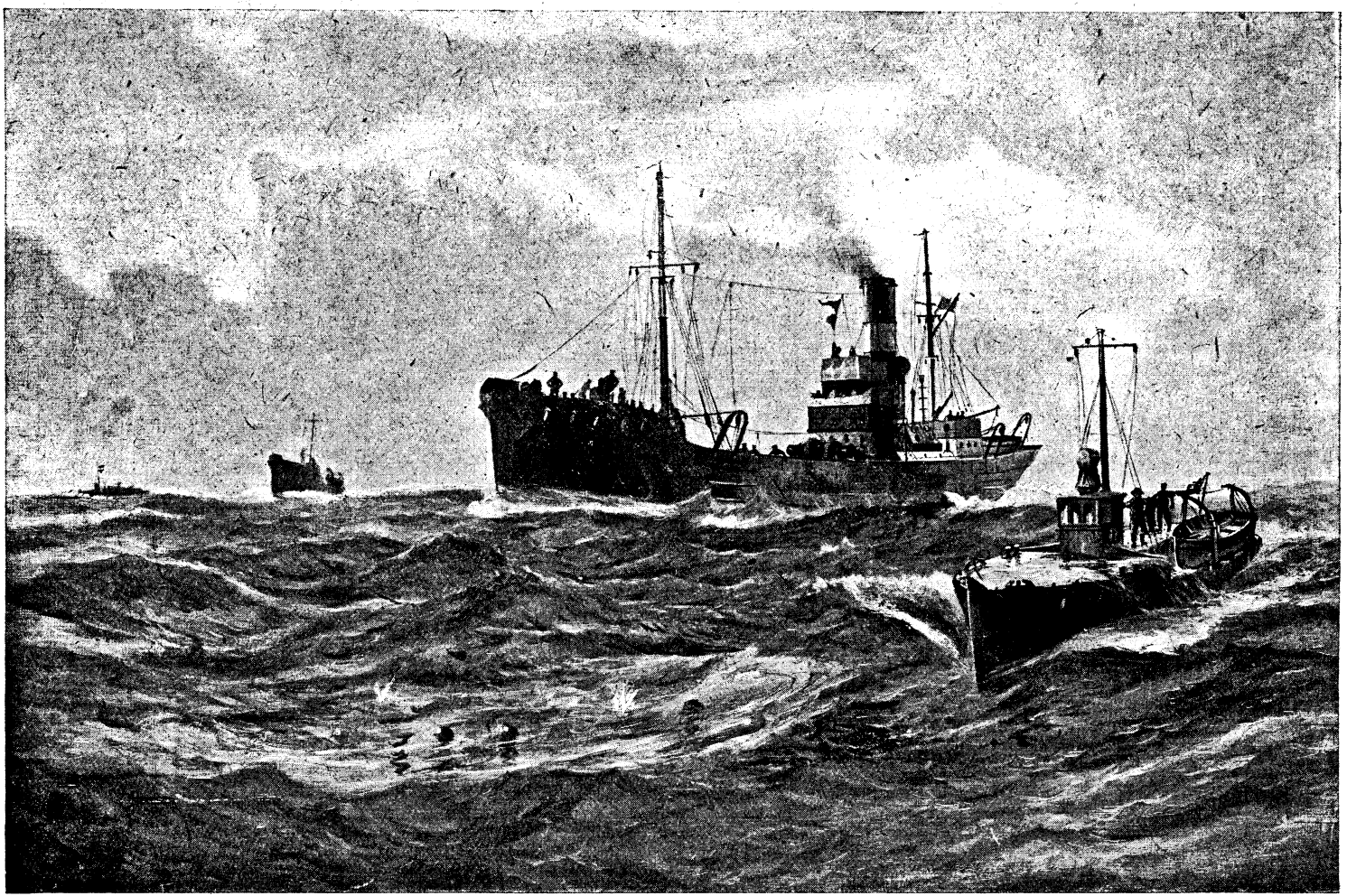
although unknown 50 years ago, is one of the most popular throughout the whole world to-day, but at the same time there are still a great many people who have yet to learn that the word is a registered trade mark and the exclusive property of the Chesebrough Manufacturing Co., of New York, London, Moscow, Montreal, etc. **"Vaseline"** was coined by Mr. R. A. CHESEBROUGH to immortalise his discovery of the substance which he named **Petroleum Jelly**, and in order that the future generations might benefit, and the sufferings of the afflicted alleviated, he registered **"Vaseline"** as a distinguishing mark, to **protect the public from dangerous imitations and adulterations.**



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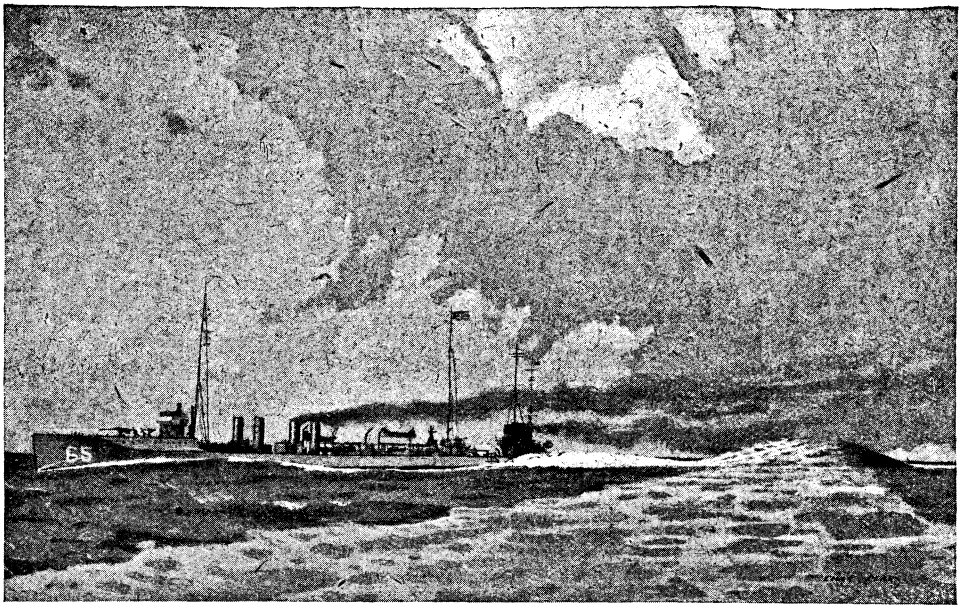
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PATROL VESSELS RACING UP TO AN OILY PATCH ON THE WATER WHICH INDICATES THE SUCCESS OF ONE OF THE NEW UNDERSEA GRENADES.

Drawn by G. H. Davis. See article in this number on "Submarine Fighting."



AN AMERICAN DESTROYER DROPPING A DEPTH CHARGE ACROSS A SUBMARINE'S TRACK: A GREAT MOUND OF WATER CAUSED BY AN UNDERWATER EXPLOSION.

Drawn by Charles Pears.

SUBMARINE FIGHTING

RECORDS OF UNDERWATER ADVENTURE

By H. C. FERRABY

WE hear much of the work of the anti-submarine craft, of their efforts to destroy the underwater peril, and of their long and often weary hunts for victims. But what about the victims? What are their feelings, what are their difficulties, what are their adventures? There is much secrecy, and necessarily so, about submarine work. In one respect, the Germans have the advantage of the Allies, in that more of their submarines have been attacked than of ours, for the simple reason that we employ about twenty submarine-chasers to every one that the Germans use against our submerged craft. We have, however, in our confidential archives much hair-raising narrative, told in the curt official manner, and on the basis of those records I have been allowed to build up this article.

"Diving patrol" is one of the hardest tasks ever given to men. The need for hundreds of patrol craft in European waters has been so great during the War, however, that even submarines have had to be roped in for the work, and on diving patrol, as they picturesquely call it, they have faced the worst of winter weather and all the dangers of sea war. One British submarine commander tells a good tale against himself, showing how very wideawake you have to be at this work.

He was away on patrol somewhere in the northern mists, and among his duties was the stopping and examining of merchant ships. He was plodding along on the surface, half his crew above deck, getting a breath of fresh air and a sight of the sky, when the haze on the horizon evolved itself into the shape of a merchant ship. The submarine slewed round towards her and, when she was within sight, made the signal "Stop engines," and then "Send a boat."

The submarine commander proposed to do himself the pleasure of examining the ship's papers and cargo. The merchantman obediently lay-to, and the submarine chugged along towards her till the range was reduced to a mile. Then the neutral flag at the steamer's stern was hauled down, the German naval ensign was hoisted, and 6-inch guns began to bark.

It was a tight corner. The submarine's guns were manned, but they were pop-guns to the heavy pieces of the German decoy ship, and, besides, the "tramp" was suddenly showing a remarkable turn of speed, and charging down on the submarine to ram her. "In two shakes of a lamb's tail" would about describe the speed with which crew and commander tumbled below, closed hatches, and dived. It was a near thing, but they escaped, suffering only a severe jarring as two depth-charges exploded about a hundred feet away.

That is the sort of thing that German submarines suffer from day after day. Our men are less exposed to attack because German surface ships are few and far between. And so it has come about that most of the fighting that our submarines have to do is against their own kind of craft from Kiel and Wilhelmshaven—a form of single-ship action which it was always assumed, before the War, could never take place. People forgot one little fact in Nature, which is that blind mole can fight blind mole, so why not submarine versus submarine?

Turning over the pages of the Admiralty records, one comes across an entry like this:—

10.0 A.M.—Sighted hostile submarine. Attacked same.

10.3 A.M.—Torpedoed submarine. Hit with one torpedo amidships. Submarine seen to blow up and disappear.

This is pretty rapid work, and it was probably sheer luck that allowed of such rapid shooting. Far more often it happens that the quarry has to be hunted for a couple of hours or more before a torpedo-tube can be brought to bear, and even then failure is as likely as success. This is the sort of thing that happens:—

A British submarine pushes her periscope above the surface for the commander to have a look round. He sights a German U-boat some distance away, evidently just starting for a surface cruise, with men on the bridge spreading the wind-screen. The look-out in the U-boat spots the periscope, reports, and a few seconds later she is under water. For an hour or an hour and a half they circle round, sparring for an opening, finding each other only at intervals as they slip cautiously to the surface, take a peep round, and dive again. Then at last the German is deceived. He has seen nothing of his adversary for some time, he hopes that the chase has been abandoned, and, anyway, his batteries need recharging badly, and he can only do that on the surface. He stays up, and the breaking sea to leeward hides the bobbing periscope of the British craft.

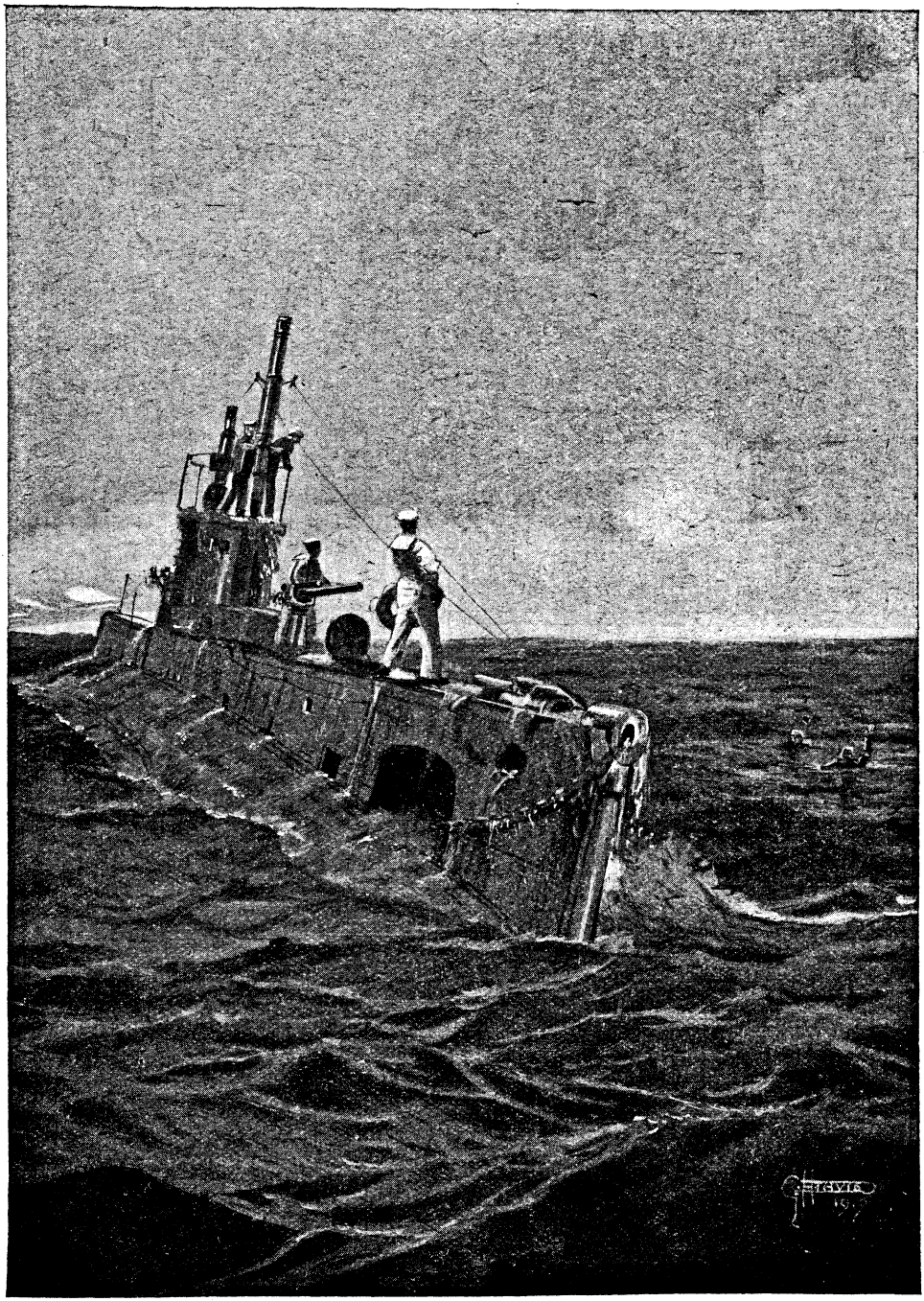
The wind has risen and the water is loppy. Moreover, they have wormed their way, during the chase, into shoals. While manœuvring to attack, our submarine bumps the bottom heavily several times, and nearly bounces out of the water, which those in The Trade technically call "breaking surface." To do that is to betray your position. It has to be avoided by most skilful navigation.

The range is reduced to five hundred and fifty yards. Two tubes are fired, and the submarine, lightened by nearly three hundredweight of metal, makes another effort to break surface. She is kept down, and all on board listen with strained attention. Between fifteen and twenty tense seconds pass. Then a heavy reverberation is felt all through the hull. One at least of the torpedoes has got home.

A further cautious pause, and then the tip of the periscope slips for a second through the tumbling waves. There is no sign of the enemy, but the water where she had last been seen is boiling. The British submarine slowly moves towards the spot. As the periscope touches the edge of the boiling area, it is suddenly obscured—covered with oil.

Fritz has evidently gone west.

It is not always possible to investigate the scene of the destruction like that, however. Many of our submarines work in close proximity to German naval bases in the Ems and Weser estuaries, and one report records laconically that after seeing, through the periscope, a large column of yellow smoke, in the midst of which the U-boat disappeared, the British submarine had to put down and slip away, because enemy destroyers were hurrying to the spot. The commander put four miles between him and the scene of the attacks and then rested, but the enemy were after him. Many vessels were heard throughout the day in close proximity, depth-charges kept on going off, and once a wire hawser, with which the Germans were sweeping for



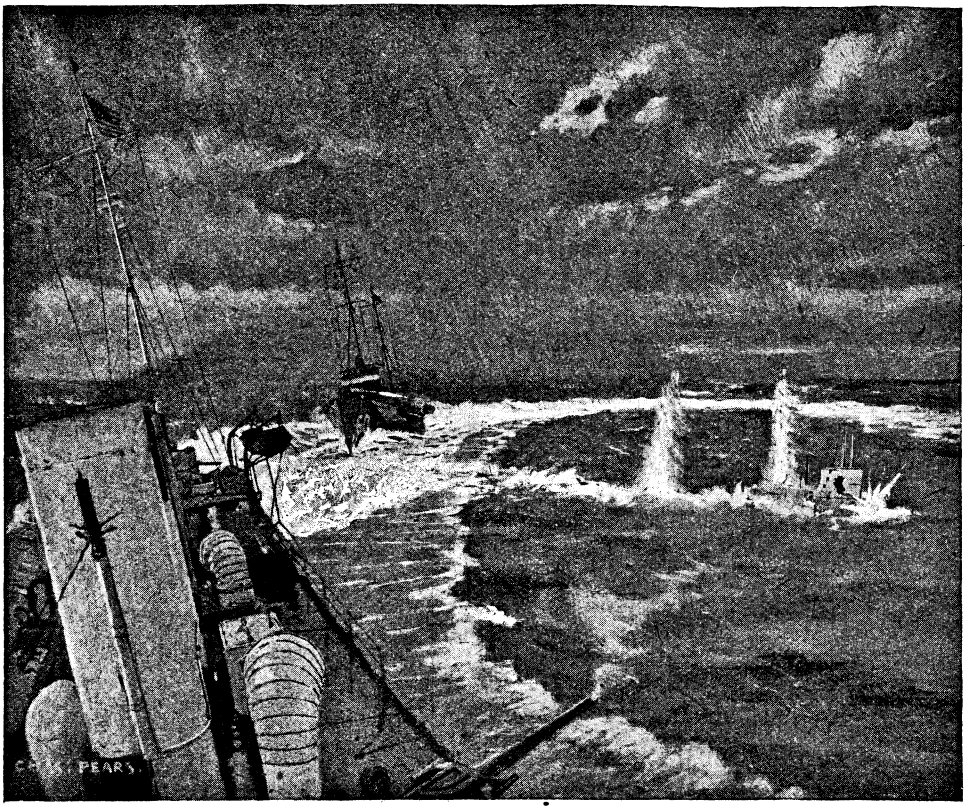
A BRITISH SUBMARINE, AFTER SINKING AN ENEMY U-BOAT, PICKING UP THE SURVIVORS.

Drawn by G. H. Davis. The above incident shows one of the methods by which the German submarine is being slowly and steadily checkmated at her game of sinking merchantmen and passenger ships: "A British submarine on patrol sighted an enemy submarine. The British boat dived, and later she picked up the enemy, and fired at an estimated range of 800 yards. She rose to the surface and sighted a patch of oil with survivors swimming in it; they were taken prisoner. They stated that the torpedo had struck them just before the conning tower. The submarine rolled over and sank, the survivors being blown up through the conning tower."

him, scraped along the port side of the submarine. That is an adventure that most landsmen would willingly forego.

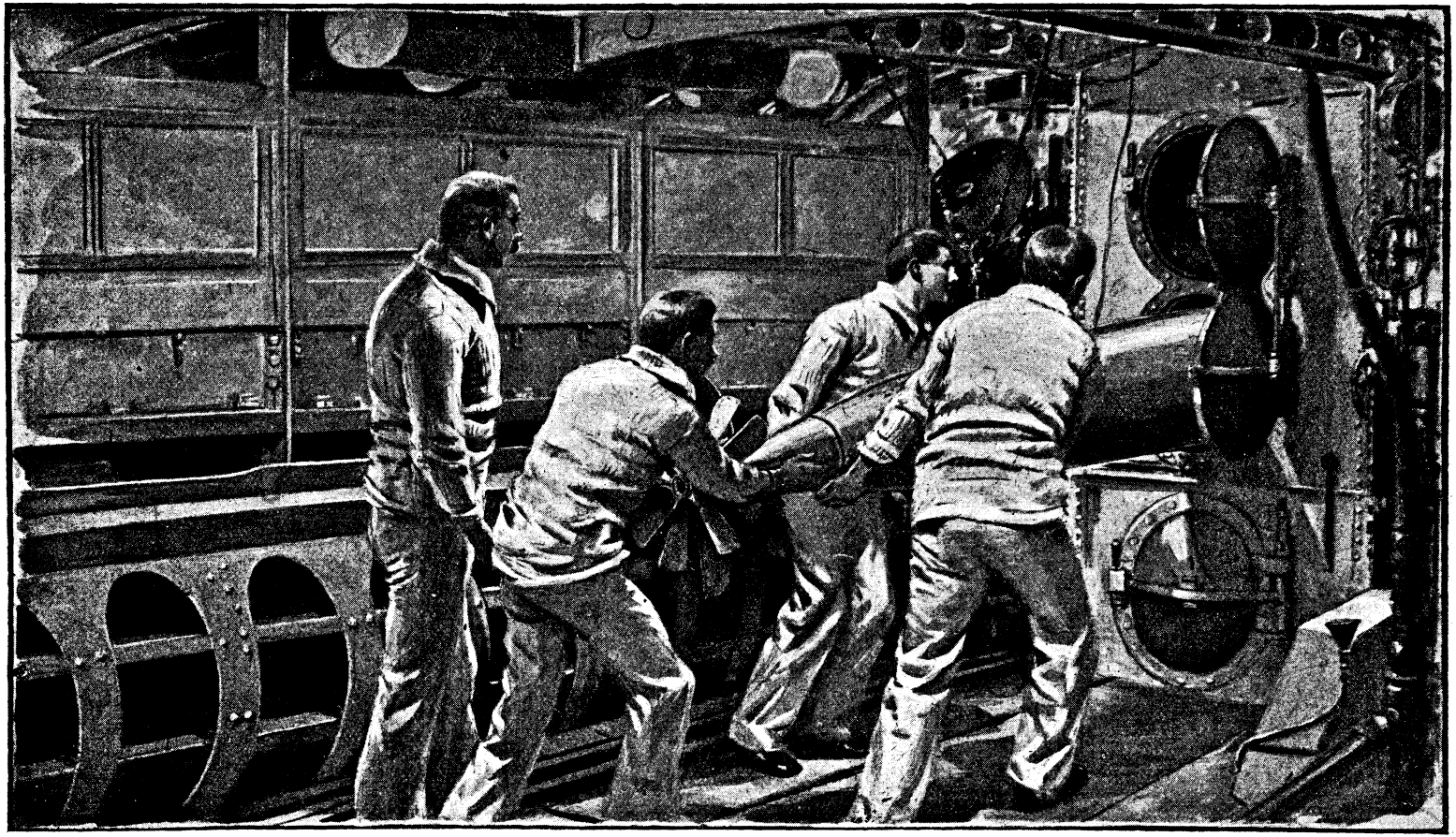
What happens in a submarine that is depth-charged? The man who dropped the charge is always firmly convinced that he blew the submarine to atoms. That is a failing that is not peculiar to the men of any one navy. They are all optimists. There is one most circumstantial report in the records at the British Admiralty by the skipper of a patrol trawler, who describes how he hit the submarine first on the surface with gunfire, and then dropped several charges over the spot where she submerged, and saw oil come to the top. He claimed confidently that she was destroyed. A cold-blooded official of the Submarine Intelligence Department, with many months of experience behind him, merely noted in pencil, on the margin of the report: "Catalogue as possibly slightly damaged." So much for human hopes afloat.

As a matter of fact, the depth-charge is only effective within a comparatively narrow radius. It makes a terrific commotion in the water, and merchant skippers who have had one touched off near them for the first time have frequently vowed that they were torpedoed and sinking rapidly when their ship had not been even attacked. The estimates as to the effective range of the explosion on the hull of a submarine vary, but, generally speaking, submarine commanders say that they are safe if the charge goes off more than eighty feet away. The effect inside the submarine even at that distance is considerable. At nearer range the entire crew may be thrown stunned to the floor. If the inner plating of the hull is strained at all by the concussion, sea-water will begin to leak in and find its way to the electric storage batteries, and then, mingling with the acids, will set up chlorine gas. One British submarine that suffered thus was successfully navigated to her base by her crew, who never took off



THE DESTRUCTION OF A GERMAN SUBMARINE BY TWO AMERICAN DESTROYERS: THE U.S.A. BOATS CIRCLING ROUND AND SHELLING THE ENEMY.

Drawn by Charles Pears.



CHARGING A TORPEDO-TUBE IN A GERMAN SUBMARINE.

Most German submarines carry three torpedo-tubes; some later vessels have four. The tubes (as in the boats of all navies) are built into the structure of the vessel, which has, therefore, to be headed exactly in the direction the torpedo is to take—"laid" on the enemy, just as a gun is pointed. A torpedo-tube is simply a metal tube into which the torpedo fits closely, with hinged door-flaps at each end. The torpedo is slid in, the inner door closed and the outer opened. A valve in the tube is opened by electricity, and the torpedo shot out by means of compressed air. A guiding bar holds it until clear of the vessel, and starts the propelling mechanism of the torpedo, releasing also the safety-catch of the detonator of the explosive charge.

their gas masks from the moment the deadly poison was first detected until they were well within British territorial waters.

The appearance of oil on the surface is not conclusive proof, for the reason that all big modern submarines carry their oil tanks between the outer and inner hull. The tanks may be damaged, but the inside wall may be still intact. It is only when wreckage is shot to the surface that there is strong presumptive evidence of fatal damage.

The scene of such an explosion is gruesome. The first thing visible is a vast heaving of the water, and this forms into a waterspout that shoots up thirty feet into the air. The grandeur of that fountain has no interest for the watchers in the anti-submarine craft. They are looking for evidence. It may be a bit of brass tubing hurled skyward amid the spume, just a narrow pipe three inches in diameter, and perhaps no more than two feet in length. It is part of the periscope. Sometimes flat sheets of metal, part of the plating of the submarine, may be seen. Other times bits of cork, white painted wood, or cabin fittings may float up. They are valuable proofs, but the most valuable of all are the very rare human figures that are flung to the surface amid the boiling, bubbling water, across which a great patch of oil is slowly spreading. Survivors from destroyed submarines are very few. It stands to reason that when a ship is suddenly blown to pieces a hundred feet below the sea-level, the score and a half little human beings in her have small chance of escape. The rescue of a survivor is, however, nearly always conclusive proof that the submarine has been completely accounted for, since a great hole must have been blown in her to enable him to get out, and into that hole the sea-water would pour.

Ascertaining the fate of a submarine means a lot of work. One of the surest ways, and one that is always tried when the water allows of it, is sweeping the bed of the ocean with hawsers for obstructions. This can only be done, of course, in the shallower waters near the shore. Out in mid-Atlantic it is impossible, and it is probable that many submarines have failed to return to Germany of whose real fate we know no more than the Germans do.

This sweeping work has to be very carefully done. The normal obstructions on the sea-bed are fairly well known, and when the trawl catches in anything, those on the spot have to decide whether it is an ordinary snag of rock or some old sunken hulk that has been there for years. Mostly that is the explanation. Then the hawser has to be carefully disentangled by manœuvring the pair of sweeping ships back a few yards, and then lifting it till it has passed the obstruction and can be lowered again.

This blindfold searching in the deeps for evidence is one of the romances of war-time, and some strange stories could be told by the men who have done the work, and also by divers, who are often called in to verify the reports of new obstructions sent in by the sweepers.

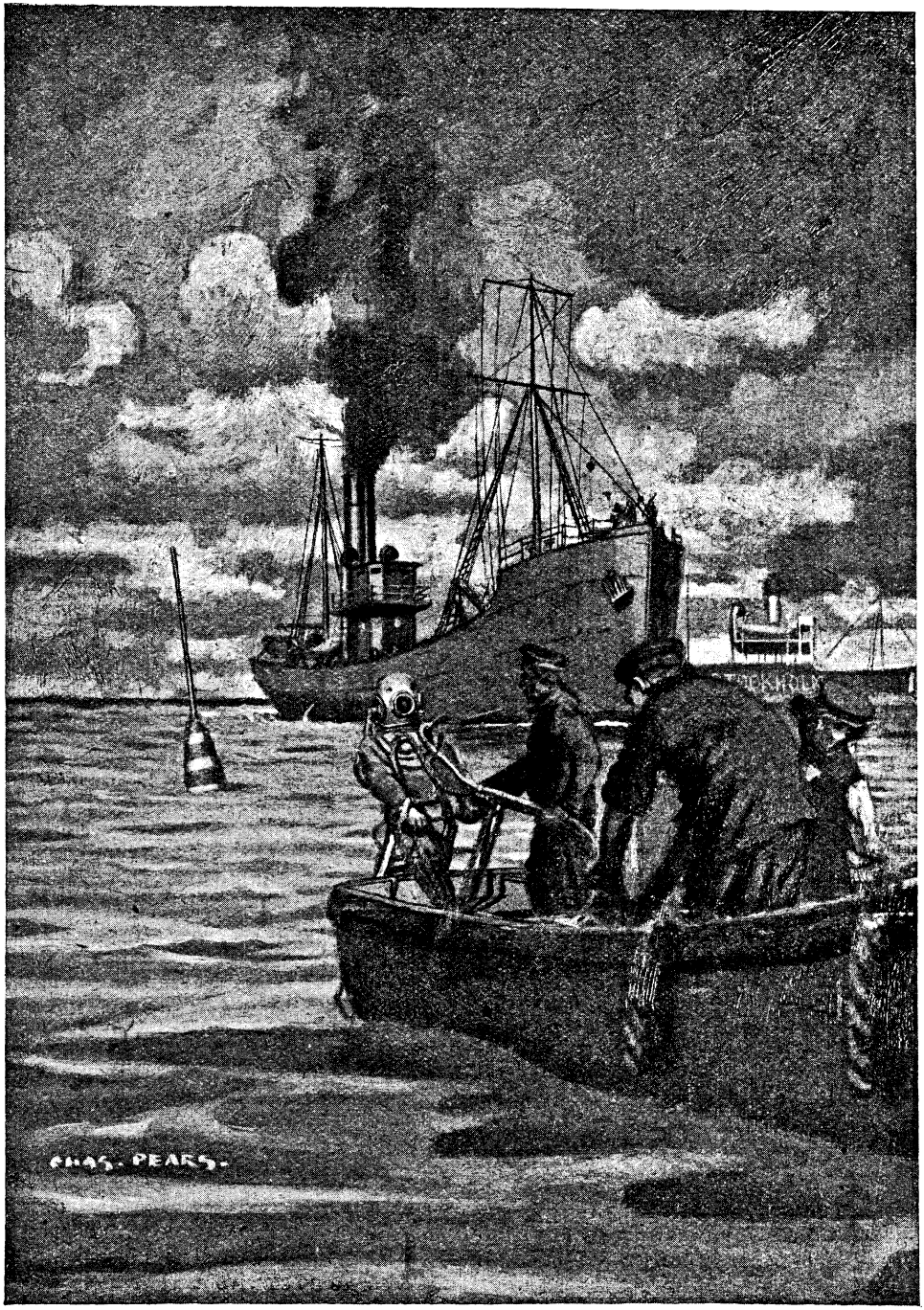
There is one horrifying mystery very briefly recorded in the Admiralty records, round which a great novelist could build up a truly terrible tale. The facts are these :—

A destroyer on escort duty sighted a periscope about two miles distant, and headed for the position. A depth-charge was dropped in what was assumed to be the enemy's course, the U-boat having naturally dived at the first sign of pursuit. Nothing happened. The great jet of water went up into the air, but there was no oil, no wreckage, no survivors, nor was there any sign of movement below.

The destroyer continued on her way, but an hour later another vessel, passing the same spot, heard a heavy, dull underwater explosion. Then quantities of oil rose to the surface. That is all.

What happened in that hour? What terrible drama was played out inside the cockle-shell down on the bottom of the ocean in those sixty minutes? Something evidently had been damaged by the depth charge. The submarine would not move. Perhaps sea-water was trickling in, and fumes of chlorine gas were beginning to be noticed. Perhaps there was wild panic, men shooting themselves and strangling themselves with their handkerchiefs, rather than face the slow death that must overtake them in that motionless steel tomb. Then at the last one sane man, perhaps, set a term to all their sufferings. There is plenty of explosive in a submarine. Very little would suffice to cause that dull, heavy underwater explosion.

These are some of the perilous adventures that submarine crews of all navies have to face in war-time. They have happened to British ships and French and Italian. They will happen to the American flotillas which, we are now officially told, have come to Europe to assist in the diving patrol. And above and beyond these there is the keenest adversary of all—the flying man. His feats against underwater craft have provided



A DIVER GOING DOWN TO LOCATE A "KILLED" ENEMY SUBMARINE.
Drawn by Charles Pears.

submarine commanders with more than enough material both for fireside yarns and grey hairs before they are forty.

Submarines often have the laugh of their antagonists. One incident caused me a broad smile as I read through the records, and no doubt the U-boat commander would have laughed, too, if he had known the facts.

A British trawler skipper was out on patrol, and he heard queer noises in the sea.

There was a steady clanging noise at regular intervals from below the surface, and the skipper did his best to identify the area from which the sounds were coming, because he was convinced that there was a submarine mine-layer at work somewhere near. He made an urgent report, and mine-sweepers were sent out to the spot he indicated. The sequel can be only fittingly told in the pencilled comment of the senior mine-sweeping officer: "This area was searched by mine-sweepers for four consecutive days. No mines found."

The trawler skipper had been nicely fooled, probably by an astute U-boat commander who had seen him through the periscope, and guessed what his business on that patrol was.

Fritz is up to all sorts of tricks, and every dodge in camouflage is known to him. There is a beautiful little comedy hidden in two or three lines of typewritten report, in which a trawler skipper suggests that a long grey submarine seen in a certain locality may have been a British submarine of a certain number. This comforting reflection is rudely dispelled by an anonymous comment, obviously written by someone who knows all about that British submarine: "It was not."

These cases of mistaken identity are not infrequent. One British submarine commander had an extraordinary adventure of this sort. He was working in consort with another British submarine, and circumstances which it is not necessary to detail had forced him to navigate for some time under water and by dead reckoning. When at last he got a peep through his periscope, he picked up the sister-ship to his, but hopelessly out of station. She ought to have been a mile or two away.

The commander scratched his head, and bobbed down to think some more. He had another peep after a while, and there was the sister-ship, end-on, ahead of him, when she ought to have been well astern. At last he thought it would be well to put the other man in his place in more senses than one, so he broke surface, preparatory to signalling a terse message. And then he suddenly realised that the "sister-ship" was a camouflaged Hun. He promptly dived, and so did the German. For an hour and a half they waltzed round under water, bobbing up every now and again to take a sight, but never in a position to bring a torpedo-tube to bear, and in the end the German slipped unnoticed out of the area.

One Fritz missed instant death by a yard or two under queer circumstances. It was a pitch dark night, but the German betrayed himself to a diving patrol at a range of 4000 yards by firing a salvo at a merchantman. The British boat headed to cut off the enemy, but in the heavy swell that was running it was impossible to work the gun forward while moving rapidly through the water. Moreover, the enemy caught sight of the British boat, promptly housed his gun, and prepared to dive. A torpedo was the only chance of stopping him. One was dispatched, and the U-boat went under water while the tin fish was still about 200 yards from him. It ultimately passed right over the German's conning tower, but failed to touch anything, and so did not explode. That little 200-yard miss cost the British Navy well over £1000, since that is the cost of a torpedo.

Considering the difficulties of navigation in war-time, and adding to these the difficulty of underwater navigation at the best of times, surprisingly few submarines have been stranded. We know of cases at the Dardanelles, of one or two German craft that hit the mud off the Dutch coast, and of one British boat that was piled up in attempting to get through the Sound to the Baltic. Occasionally one runs ashore in British waters. This was the case with the well-known mine-layer U.C. 5, which went ashore off the East Coast, and with great difficulty was salved, to be used as a show ship.

A stranger case has never before been told in print. A German submarine drifted ashore, owing to certain causes over which she had no control, in the early hours of one morning. There were no regular warships about, but a few armed trawlers which were in the neighbourhood closed in. They were very much outranged by the bigger guns of the German, but they pushed on until they had reduced the range enough to be able to hit him, and hit him they did, though they were under heavy fire the whole time. The contest went on for nearly a quarter of an hour, before a destroyer came smoking over the horizon, eager for the fray. That broke Fritz's heart. He blew himself up, and there were no survivors.

Involuntary suicide was committed by another of the tribe, a mine-layer which was discovered at work by our patrols. Not a shot had been fired at her, but all at once she went up in a sheet of flame and smoke. There was one survivor, and he hazarded the guess that the commander, when he discovered that he had encountered enemy craft, tried to slip away, and lost track of

bearings of the mines he had laid. So the mine-layer calmly sat on one of her own eggs, with results as disastrous as they were swift.

These are some stories of adventure under-seas. But let no one run away with the idea that submarine work is one long thrill. It is not, particularly on diving patrol. There are long weeks of monotony, when every scrap of magazine or book that can be raked up from kindly relatives is welcome. The submarine patrols work all over the place, not only in enemy waters, where there is excitement and to spare, but out in the Atlantic, where a false alarm once a day and a real one once a week is about all the amusement provided by a wily enemy. The work has to be carried on, whatever the weather, for the modern submarine is as much a sea-going vessel as the destroyer. It is no unusual thing for the crew to be unable to sleep for the cold, for the periscope to be completely obscured by ice, for the wireless aerials to be coated with icicles, and useless. On one particularly bitter patrol an officer recorded that after they had cruised on the surface for a while, and then went down below, the ice on their outer clothing was so thick and hard that it took several hours to thaw after the garments had been hung up in the warmed interior.

Gales are as bad. The sea is disturbed as far down as twenty-two fathoms, and the boat rocks and pitches so much that it is dangerous to get anywhere near the ocean bed, or she might bump a hole in herself, and on the surface it was almost impossible to do more than keep her head-on to the sea, with heavy spray crashing down into the ship all the time through the ventilators. Submarine life is no picnic in war-time.

POSTIE.

FOR mony a day an' mony a mile,
Ower whin an' heather, dyke an' stile,
Auld Postie's trampit's weary way,
Frae keek o' dawn tae streek o' day.

Be't fair or foul, he's tae the road,
Wi' papers, letters, paircels—"load,"
Up ere the rugged sheiling reeks,
Or wintry sun ower Morven keeks.

In wind an' snaw, an' oft in rain,
His withered shanks whiles wrung wi' pain,
He plods on tent'ly by the way,
An' gaithers gear o' Nature's day.

He kens the fish, the flesh, the fowl,
An' a' the craters sma' that prowl
Upo' the hill, the muir, the glen,
The eagle's nest, the fox's den.

The bairnies rin tae meet the man
That whiles haes sweeties in his han';
The lassies wait him by the stile,
An' plead for news wi' airtless guile.

A weather prophet sure is he—
He vows the skies can niver lee;
O' ilka cloud he kens the tale,
Be't hingin' ower or hill or dale.

A mony a secret Postie kens,
An' mony a deedly quarrel men's,
Ticht lockit in his breist he keeps
The trust o' him that lives or "sleeps."

He's welcome aye in but or ben,
Whauriver lie the haunts o' men;
Has aye a pipe, a bite, a sup,
An' whiles the festive lovin' cup.

Ae wintry day the mountains stern
Were blin' wi' drift, nor eye discern
The shargour-roadie throu' the glen,
That icy sheet concealed its fen.

Postie, noo aged an' sorely bent,
Pursued his way, nor takkin tent,
Had wandered oot the trackless muir,
As deadlier, wilder grew the stour.

An' noo he's joined the sleepers there
That rest in Girnoc kirkyard bare.
He wrocht for lang, deserv't his rest,
Nae mair tae be by toil opprest.

J. L. DICKIE.

THE NORTHERN MEN

By EDGAR WALLACE

Illustrated by Maurice Greiffenhagen, A.R.A.

PATRICIA HAMILTON awaited Bones by the wire gate which leads to the Residency woods. She sat on a camp stool, fanning herself with the brim of her big white topee, and the gentle breeze which blew in from the sea sent her fair hair straying.

She had changed very little since the day she had arrived and had been so unceremoniously greeted by Lieutenant Tibbetts. She was of the kind that takes the sun evenly. A little browner of face and hands, and a little finer, perhaps—only Sanders noticed this, curiously enough—she had lost none of her vigour, nor had the hot days and the evening mists brought to her that state of lethargy which her friends had warned her would accompany a year's residence in a Coast town.

She was a little distrait this morning, for the end of her stay was in sight, and although her visit to England would only be in the nature of a break, and she had resolved to return at the end of six months, she grudged those one hundred and eighty odd days in which she would sink into insignificance amidst some forty millions of people.

Ordinarily, she would have been very angry indeed with Bones for keeping her waiting, but to-day she welcomed the opportunity for melancholy meditation on the edge of the little forest, every yard of which she knew. Bones, an angular figure in white duck, sprinted across the square, his helmet on the back of his head, a fishing-rod in one hand and the lunch basket in the other. On his face was the look of one in pain, and now and again he would check his gait to hop on one leg.

"Bones, you've kept me waiting," she said sternly.

Bones, with an agonised expression, was searching gingerly his trousers pockets.

"Fish hooks, dear old sister," he explained breathlessly. "I thought I'd forgotten 'em, but—ouch!—I haven't. Come out—ooh!"

He extracted them one by one.

"Rush of business, jolly old miss," he said, in answer to her reproach. "Beastly old forms an' requisitions, pay vouchers an' company accounts. Oh, Ali!"

He whistled vulgarly to his dignified servant, who was sailing majestically in his wake.

"He'll carry everything," said Bones, and dropped basket and fishing-rod as though they were hot coals.

"You're lazy, Bones," she said.

"It's not laziness, dear old friend," said Bones, falling in by her side; "it's—well, it's something else. I haven't the heart to do any kind of work. I'm just desperate, dear old Hamilton's sister, I'm reckless—I don't know what I shall do to-night!"

"What can you do?" she asked, unimpressed.

Bones shrugged his shoulders.

"Drink," he said sombrely, "take opium, gamble——"

"Don't be silly, Bones," she laughed. "There's nothing to drink but lime-juice, and Mr. Sanders wouldn't give you opium, and who could you gamble with?"

A staggering question for a man bent upon a career of vice.

"Ali plays a good game of double dummy bridge," he said hopefully.

"You don't take enough exercise, Bones," she said gently; "your liver is out of order."

"Don't be indelicate, dear old friend," he begged, and heaved a great and jerky sigh.

He scarcely spoke again until they were seated on the river bank, their lines cast upon the placid surface of the backwater, where, according to legend, the edible river fish most do congregate. Presently, and after an unusually long silence, Bones cleared his throat.

"Dear old Patricia, you're goin' away," he said huskily.

"Yes, Bones. Aren't you glad?"

"Oh, very," said Bones dismally. "Ha, ha! Hear me laugh!"

"You'll frighten the fish," she warned.

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"But I have been an awful nuisance to you all."

"Pull yourself together, silly old Miss Hamilton! Why, you've been a jolly old beam of sunshine on a dark an' dreary day. You've been primroses on a dust-heap!"

He put down his rod, and, diving into his inside pocket, he drew forth a sheet of blue official paper. He hesitated before he placed it in her outstretched hand.

"You won't laugh?" he said, more huskily than ever.

"Oh, Bones, how could you think I would?" she reproached him.

"It's dashed off. I'm not sure the spellin' is all that it ought to be, but the soul, dear old——"

He choked and sniffed, and, thrusting the paper into her hand, he rose and strode away.

Patricia opened the paper and read it. It was obviously poetry, because every line began with a capital letter.

Dear old Miss Hamilton, farewell!
What I suffer, nobody, nobody can tell.

(Bones had a trick of repeating words, and even sentences, in the agony of his compositions.)

Far away ore the briney foam
You're going, dear old Miss Hamilton, home,
Leaving Sanders, Ham, and Bones,
Making noise of moans, of moans and groans.
The spring is coming, and the flowers are blooming gaily—

it went on surprisingly—

And we are dreading the hour, the hour,
The hour of your departure daily.
Oh, Love! How strange it seems to be!
Has it come at last—can it really be?
I, who was adermant, addimant, adoment to feminine charms,
At last I fall in the monster's arms!
Farewell! But not good-by, but not good-by,
If you don't come back, I'll gladly, gladly die!

The girl read it through, and her eyes were dim with tears.

"Have you finished?" demanded the muffled voice of Bones, who stood with averted head a dozen yards away.

"Yes, Bones," she said gently.

"Did you laugh?"

"Oh, Bones, you don't think I was such a pig?"

Bones turned his red face to her and walked slowly to where he had dropped his rod.

"Of course," he said gruffly, "it's not playin' the game—writin' poetry, an' all that—but—but I know you're too sensible to have your jolly old head turned."

She checked the laugh, divining something of his distress.

There was a long interval of silence.

"You wouldn't like to marry anybody, would you?" he asked, his face still averted.

"I don't think so, Bones," she answered softly.

"You wouldn't like to marry a silly ass, ugly ass, awkward ass, or anything like that, I suppose, dear old—dear—Miss Hamilton, I mean?"

"I shouldn't like to marry even as brave and kindly a gentleman as you, Bones," she said.

"I meant me," said Bones, in surprise.

"I guessed that," she said, without a smile.

Again the silence.

"I'm not much," said Bones, with a sigh; "I'm a pretty good shot, a whale at languages, a bit of a scientist, an' I can write—whatever else I can't do, I can write."

"You write very nicely, Bones," she said meekly.

"In the military line of business," he went on, in tones of comfort, "I can give points to some of those jolly old professors at the Staff College—I've got tact an' initiative an' a knowledge of navigation."

"You have everything you really want, Bones," she said, rising.

She crossed to behind where he sat and put her two hands on his shoulders.

"You're a dear, Bones, and when you're a little older you'll make somebody very happy."

"My young life is ended," said Bones miserably, "an' if it wasn't for the fact that jolly old Sanders couldn't get along without me, an' your dear old brother, who, if you will excuse the criticism, dear old friend, is like a child without me, I'd—I'd——"

"Get up, you humbug!" she said, and Bones rose with what he hoped was a sad, wan smile, but which in reality was a very broad grin.

"That is for all your sweetness," said Patricia Hamilton, and kissed him lightly on the cheek.

It was noticeable all that day that Bones walked about with his head in the air, and that his attitude towards equals and superiors alike was one of arrogant condescension.

He assumed toward Patricia Hamilton an attitude which might only be described as one of ponderous protection. Sanders—a busy man preparing for Patricia Hamilton's farewell trip—remarked upon this evidence of sinful pride.

"Perhaps he has a boil on his neck," suggested the practical Hamilton.

Whatever was the cause—which we may

well guess—Bones was cheerful enough, and went to work whole-heartedly to assist in the organisation of Patricia's "joy ride."

The *Zaire* was to go the full journey to the Ochori, and Sanders was to utilise the occasion to hold three State palavers.

"There should be four," he explained to Hamilton. "Borbini, of the Northern Ochori, has been selling slaves across the mountains to the Great King. Bosambo has very wisely kept out of the palaver, because it could only end one way. There will be a struggle one of these days between the north and the south, and I am not anxious to bring matters to a head—at least, not on this trip. Once your sister is out of the country, we will have a clear-up in the north."

It was a joyful holiday party which sailed at dawn the next day, and no shadow of the northern feud lay over them.

On the river they have a cumbersome saying which, literally translated, runs: "Long-sun-much-sweetness; sun-road-sweeter; no-sun-road-evil; beware-short-sun-road (or way)."

Made into a passable epigram for white consumption, this saying is: "Beware of the northern men, for little sunshine makes them sour."

The Territories which Sanders rules lie partly upon and partly to the north of the equator, and there is very little difference between the river mouth and far borders of the Great King. It is astounding that an unlettered people should realise that there is any difference at all, yet the saying stands, and has stood, perhaps, for a thousand years, as a rough generalisation.

The northernmost State in the Territories is the Ochori, and the northern lands of that country invariably supplied the insurgent elements of its population. In the days when the Ochori were a slave-folk, and easy prey to the Akasava, Bomongo, and Isisi tribes, the northern section of the country never fell under the influence of the invader. One Akasava chief had led an army into the broken forest country of the north, and had returned most thankfully. His shattered army straggled home at intervals. Then Bosambo, a prison-breaker, a Krooman of Kroomen, had come upon the scene, and had usurped the rights of kingship over the timid southern Ochori. From that day the Akasava had been checked, raids on the goats and women of the Ochori had ceased, and Bosambo had made of his folk the most feared and the best hated of all peoples.

The northmen accepted his kingship with amused tolerance; they had sent him tribute and nominal taxes. Sometimes they would send him nothing. On such occasions Bosambo, a very tactful man, who recognised the delicacy of the situation, and the extreme disfavour with which Mr. Commissioner Sanders viewed anything like civil war, had a way of his own.

The main communication between the Upper Ochori and the outside world was the Machengombi River, a deep, narrow stream which emptied itself into the Great River twenty miles north of the Ochori city.

When news came that, on one excuse or the other, no tribute might be expected, Bosambo acted.

The canoes of the northmen, laden with skins, rubber, and gum, on their way to the Government trading posts on the Lower Isisi, would find their progress blocked.

On a certain day, following a very prolonged abstention from tribute, there arrived at the Ochori city a northern chief named K'feri. He was the son of the greatest of all the northern chiefs, Borbini-M'shimi, and he came with an imposing array of councillors.

Bosambo held a great palaver, for he recognised the importance of the visit.

"O Bosambo," said K'feri, a tall, forbidding man, who spoke as to his equal, "I talk for my father, Borbini, the chief paramount of all lands from the swamps to the borders of the Great King, the friend of chiefs and of kings."

"A squeaking rat may speak for a leopard," said Bosambo, "yet I should hear no more than a squeak."

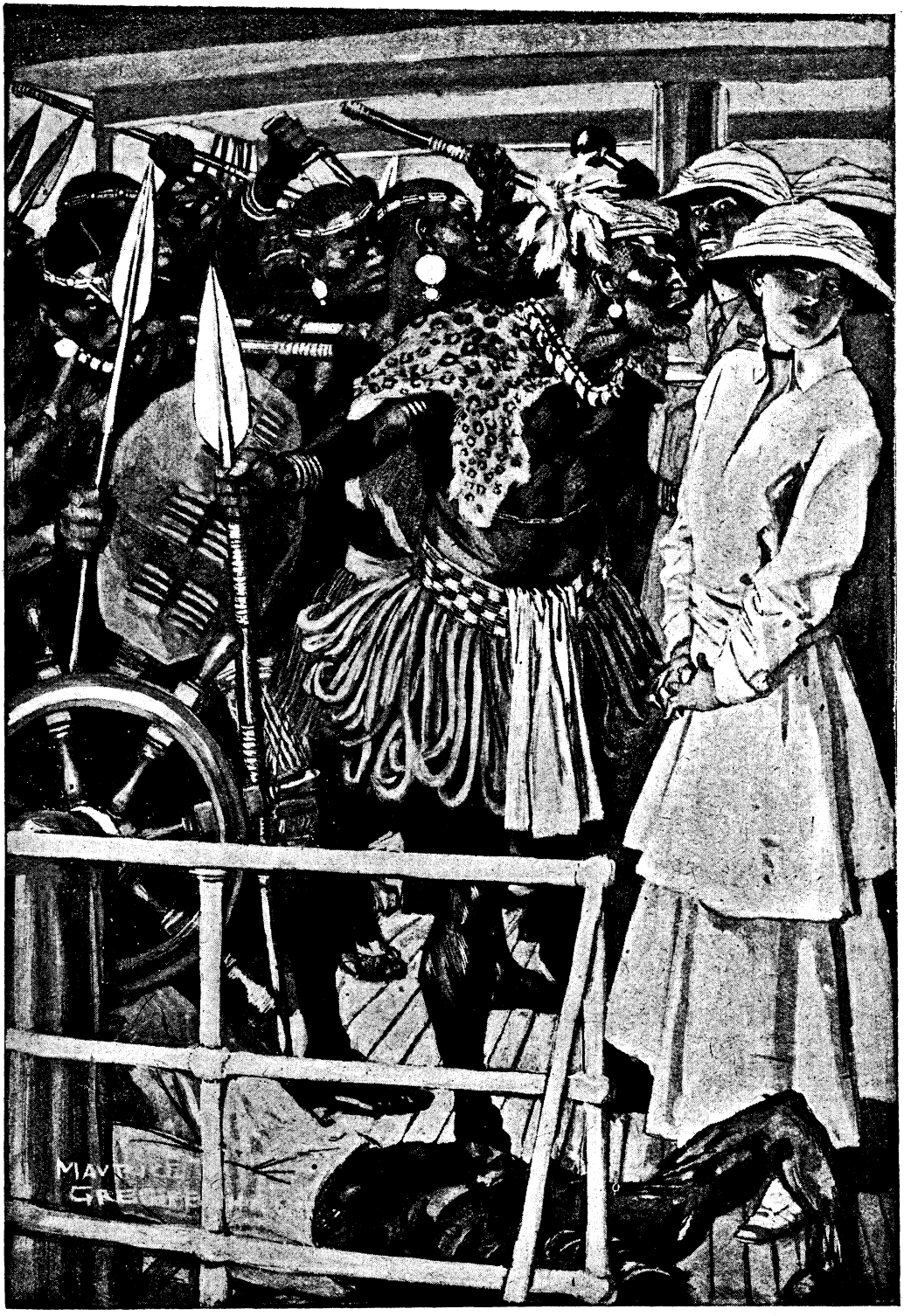
K'feri scowled at the tittering people who squatted about the palaver house.

"Lord," he said, "if I am a rat, you shall hear my great squeak, for there is shame in my stomach for all that you have done. When the moon was full, Borbini, my father, sent twenty canoes to the Great River, and midway between the village of K'nama and Sugundi they found many trees felled so that they lay across the river, and the canoes could not pass."

"M'shimba-m'shamba has been abroad with his fearful lightning," said Bosambo glibly. "Who can check the strong one who plucks trees as men pluck grass?"

K'feri's nose wrinkled in a sneer.

"M'shimba-m'shamba is very wise," he said, "but he does not take an axe to the trees, nor fasten them with skin ropes. Now, Bosambo, my father knows that you have



"Borbini came peering at her, his scrubby white beard pushed forward.'

done this wicked thing because he sent you no rich gifts."

Bosambo rose and kicked away the carved stool on which he had been sitting, and K'feri drew back apprehensively, for the overturned stool had a special native significance.

"K'feri," said Bosambo gently, "I am the king of this land, and take no gifts from little chiefs. I take my tribute, and so much I keep for myself, and so much I send to my lord Sandi, who is my king and friend. This I shall take for my lifetime, and he who follows shall also take it, and so for ever."

K'feri drew his mantle of monkey tails about his generous person and delivered his thunderbolt

"Chief," he said boldly, "we people of the north know no king and send no more tribute—thus says the paramount chief, my father. This also he says——"

So far he got when the nearest missile within Bosambo's reach—which was a carved stool—struck him full in the chest, and he went down with a little hiccough.

"Who touches K'feri dies quickly," said Bosambo, and balanced his light spear in the palm of his hand.

He stood now with his back to the entrance of his great hut, a tall figure of a man, muscled and like an Andalusian bull.

Out from his hut came the brown-faced Kano girl who was his wife, his high shield in her hand, the hide belt of his heavy elephant sword slung over her bare shoulder. With not so much as a glance at the scowling men about him, she passed the shield and its armoury of spears to her husband, and deftly strapped the belt about his waist. He glanced at her with the light of great kindness in his eyes, then fixed the group—the northerners ripe for murder, the southern people a little awe-stricken.

K'feri lay gasping on the ground, half conscious and wholly helpless.

"Which man of you calls K'feri his chief friend?" demanded Bosambo.

There was an awkward pause, and then the little chief of a northern village stepped forth hesitatingly.

"Lord," he said sullenly, "I am that man."

Bosambo dropped his left hand and whipped out the broad elephant sword. He gripped the keen blade and offered the hilt to the reluctant man.

"Strike!" said Bosambo.

The other licked his dry lips, looked from left to right, then, raising the sword, he brought it down with a deep "Huh!" across the neck of the prostrate K'feri.

Bosambo took back the sword amidst a dead silence.

"O people," said he, "here lies K'feri, who spoke evilly to my face, and would act worse, since he would lead the Ochori to war. Who follows him? Speak now!"

But there was no speech. They carried away the dead man and buried him in a shallow grave.

Within a week Borbini, chief of the northern Ochori, collected a thousand spears and struck southwards in a hot rage, for K'feri had been his favourite son.

"There shall be a great killing," he promised his headmen, "and as for Bosambo, he shall die very slowly, for he is Sandi's spy, and carried the story of the women we sold to B'slanogoso of the Big Hills."

He went by the River Machengombi in fifty great war canoes, halted half a day to remove the tree-barriers which lay across the stream, and struck the Big River at sundown.

To attack directly from the river was impossible, since there were fishing villages to be passed, and these could sound a *lokali* alarm which would put Bosambo on his guard. Borbini camped for the night and started at dawn.

That same daybreak saw one of the river watchmen at the door of Bosambo's hut, and his low call brought Bosambo into the chill morning air.

"Lord," said the watchman, "Sandi's great *puc-a-puc* has passed northward."

"You are a mad goat," said Bosambo, "for if Sandi came, he would tie up at my beach."

"Listen!" said the watchman.

Bosambo bent his head.

Faintly, but well defined, came the "puc-a-puc-a-puc," as the broad paddles of the stern-wheeled *Zaire* struck the still waters of the river.

"Sh-a!" said Bosambo, in dismay. "Now this is bad. For if Borbini is not bringing his spears to a killing, then I am a fool. Go quickly and rouse my paddlers."

"Lord," said the philosophical watchman, "who shall overtake the *puc-a-puc* against the stream?"

"I am afraid," said Bosambo. And a few minutes later his big war drum was rolling its summons to the sleeping warriors of the Ochori.

Patricia Hamilton stood on the bridge of the *Zaire* by Sanders's side, dumb in the

presence of the wonder of dawn. The high trees that fringed the bank were indigo against the pearl-grey of the pallid heavens. She had seen dawn on the Lower River, but here there was a savage wildness, a menacing freedom, a challenging violence of composition and colour which kept her silent. Here was Nature in a passion, with gaunt black rocks upflung from the bed of the river, with a riot of undergrowth writhing about the stems of great trees. Here was a silence as of death, for this world was too big for the whispers which came with dawn.

"Isn't it wonderful?" she whispered. "You wouldn't think that these people would venture——"

"Which people?" asked Sanders quickly, and, following the direction of her outstretched finger, he saw the canoes ahead.

Hamilton heard the agitated ring of the engine telegraph, and felt the quiver of the *Zaire's* hull as she forged ahead at full speed. Bones, completing his toilet, heard a familiar sound and went pale.

It was the thud and cough of a man stricken to death, and the thud was against the door of his cabin.

He lifted down his revolver belt and stepped into the little alley-way over the dead body of a native deck hand, and ran forward.

The air was a-whir with flying arrows, and the girl was crouching in one corner of the bridge, her white dress stained red with the blood of a dead steersman.

Sanders alone stood erect, staring grimly ahead, his eyes glued to the river for a sign of sandbanks.

"Stay where you are, Pat."

Bones heard Hamilton's voice, and half turned. That motion saved his life, for a long steel-tipped arrow just missed his face and snicked into the woodwork of Sanders's cabin.

"Get that Maxim working, Bones!"

The young man was at the gun before the order was completed; and the girl even in her fear recognised a new Bones—a Bones wholly alert, with a quaint little smile in his blue eyes and a mouth set very firm.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!" laughed the Maxim, and jammed.

Bump!

The *Zaire* jumped up and settled again.

"We're stuck," said Sanders, as the boat swung round broadside on. "I don't know what it is all about, but I rather fancy this is our Waterloo."

He looked down at the girl and smiled, and his smile was infinitely tender. Then he turned and walked to the side of the boat and held up his bare palms.

A big war canoe swung out of the ruck, the flight of arrows ceased, and Sanders looked down into the painted face of Borbini.

"O white man, I see you," said the chief insolently, "and this is a good day for me, for, behold, I came to slay the dog, and I have taken his master."

"Here am I," said Sanders calmly, "and it seems that you want no more than me. Therefore, Borbini, let your young men push my boat into deep water, that I may send my friends away, and, as for me, you shall do what is your wish."

Borbini was shaking with excitement. "This is a good day for me," he repeated. "O Sandi, I have always hated you, for you put Bosambo over me. Also you have fined me and hung my own cousin, Tegili of B'fusumaro."

"All these things I did," answered Sanders cheerfully, "and you shall have your man. Now take me and send my friends away."

Borbini leapt to the deck of the *Zaire* and stood with arms akimbo, surveying his prisoners.

Patricia Hamilton stood by her brother, and Borbini came peering at her, his scrubby white beard pushed forward.

"O ko!" he said. "There is a hut in my house for this woman."

It was death to move. The broad-bladed spears of the chief's escort touched the men's breasts, and those spears were as sharp as razors.

"There shall be a palaver," said Borbini gleefully. "O Sandi, this is the palaver you promised me!"

He brought his prisoners to land, and in a big forest clearing—which the lumbered trees and the crushed undergrowth marked as an elephants' playing-ground—sat down to administer justice, his fifty war canoes bobbing and swinging at the beach.

Beneath a great oak sat Borbini, Chief of the North, and his lined face worked and twitched in his excitement.

"O people," he cried, "here is Sandi the Feared! Here is Sandi the Great One! He brings soldiers, and men tremble; he speaks a word, and chiefs die. Now I speak, and he dies!"

This was the beginning of a speech which lasted for the greater part of half an hour, for time has no value on the Great River, and men are judged by the quantity of their oratory.

"I'm afraid this is the end," muttered Hamilton. "Pat—Sanders—can nothing be done?"

Sanders nodded. He sat between the girl and her brother, and presently he half inclined his head to her.

"Pat," he said softly, "do you understand?"

"Quite," she answered as softly. "You won't leave me to——"

"No, nor Borbini, either," he said. "But—there's something else."

She saw him trying to frame the words, and turned hot and cold.

"You—you love me, don't you?" she whispered, and leant against him.

They were unbound; there had been no necessity for further restraint than the surrounding spears offered, and Sanders put his arm about her.

Suddenly the chief's oration ended, and he stood up.

"Now!" muttered Hamilton, and set his teeth.

"O chief!'

It was Bones who spoke—Bones erect and a-quiver with excitement. His skinny finger pointed to the river behind him.

"This I say, Borbini," cried Bones shrilly, "that my powerful ju-ju is abroad this day, for the rocks are walking!"

A thousand pairs of fierce eyes glared across the river.

"Look well, people," screeched Bones, "and tell me if I lie! My great ju-ju is with me, and two rocks are moving!"

There were certainly two rocks on the farther shore, but, though the assembly strained its eyes, there was no sign of movement.

"O Tibbetti, you lie!" said Borbini. "This is——"

"Look—look!"

Again the heads were turned, and Borbini himself took a step forward, shading his eyes.

Bosambo stepped from behind the tree to which he had made his way by short rushes, whilst Bones engaged the attention of the gathering, and the sword that slew the son smote the head from the father's body.

"Kill!" bellowed Bosambo, and suddenly the woods were alive with men.

* * * * *

The girl woke up to find herself in her cabin, and Sanders was sitting at her side.

"I don't know how much of your unconsciousness was fainting and how much was sleeping," he said.

"Is—are——"

"Everything is all right," he smiled; "you've been dreaming."

She drew a long breath.

"How much was dream?" she asked.

He did not reply immediately.

"All that you wish," he said.

She put out her hand and took his.

"You know the part I want to be real, don't you?" she asked, in a low voice.

"I hope so," he said, and met her eyes.

The *Zaire* was under way, moving swiftly down river.

There came to them the voice of Bones.

"What I want you to understand, dear old Ham," it said, "is that I instantly grasped the situation—I see things in a flash. It's a—a——"

"Disease?" suggested Hamilton lazily.

"A gift—it runs in the family. Of course, I don't want to be thanked, dear old feller, an' the knowledge that the jolly old party owes its lives to me is sufficient reward, but if you happen to recommend me for a D.S.O., jolly old officer, you might put somethin' in like this——"

"I'll toss you who makes a lemon squash," said Hamilton.

A silence, then—

"Heads," said Bones, "heads an' brains, dear old Ham—an' I've won! Do I get a D.S.O. or a good cigar?"

STRAINED RELATIONS

By J. E. WHEELWRIGHT

Illustrated by Norah Schlegel

THE niece was standing on the sunny lawn, looking down at the aunt. The aunt was reclining very gracefully in the hammock. These two persons are placed in this order purposely, because the niece was older than the aunt.

It is unnecessary, owing to the shortage of paper, ink, ink-eraser, and all the other necessaries of life, to weary you with genealogical details. Aunts can be younger than nieces; in this case it was so.

Neither lady was exactly elderly, as a matter of fact. The niece, in the uniform of a V.A.D., was twenty-four; the aunt, in the hammock, was twenty-two.

The aunt was not wearing any uniform. Quite the contrary. Such shoes, and such stockings, and such a swirl of chiffon—grey chiffon with black touches! For the aunt was a widow, and her name was Mrs. Trotter, though she did not look it. Mrs. Daphne Trotter she liked to be called. She had, as a matter of fact, been christened Gertrude Alice, but she considered Daphne was more in the picture.

And the name of the niece was Stella Richardson. Stella, the V.A.D., had suddenly been granted a week's leave from her hospital. Her father and mother were lord and lady respectively of the Manor House, in the garden of which the two girls were.

This father and mother were both very excellent and very philanthropic people, much engaged in works tending to the public good. Therefore, on the receipt of Stella's wire to say she was coming home for a week, they were, sad to say, both engaged for that particular week. Papa was going to join many other bald-headed and bearded gentlemen at a business conference in the North; Mamma was going to be present at a perfect orgy of committee meetings—subject, the rearing of babies—somewhere in the East End.

So Mamma had hurriedly wired to Aunt Daphne to come and stay with and chaperon Stella. She and Papa had then taken their departure with a quiet mind.

And here was Daphne already installed as companion-chaperon. Stella had just arrived. Her little trunk was sitting in the hall, also seven large square cardboard boxes and three round ones, and a parcel or two.

That was all quite simple, as far as it went. The complications occurred later, if you call them complications.

The reason of the complications was chiefly that Aunt Daphne was really rather young for a chaperon. Also that she had wonderful sea-green eyes and very black hair, which was cut piquantly short and square all round her head and to within three-sixteenths of an inch of her eyebrows. She also had a very white skin, a colour like a pale pink carnation, a nice nose, and suitable lips.

Stella was very fair. Her nose also was a great success, as, indeed, were her other features. Moreover, she had a deep dimple in the middle of her chin. One could say more, but still, the paper shortage looms.

"Well, Estelle, and how are you?" said Gertrude Alice, alias Daphne.

"So—so," replied Stella. "Rather hipped. Do you know, Daphne, I have a great wish, for this one week only, to live again the normal life of a lady of leisure and fashion. Look at these hands!"

She held out small pink hands, rather work-worn. "That is the result of twelve months of scrubbing floors and brasses and Tommies," she said.

"You do look a little shop-soiled," said Daphne.

"As for you, you look like a cigarette advertisement," replied her niece.

"Flattered, I am sure," said Daphne, lighting a cigarette. "That is the effect I aim at. It is a pity cigarettes make me feel a little sick. But I, too, do war work."

"Oh, I know," said the niece—"vases of flowers, and white sewing, and milk at eleven, and a taxi home. I know the sort."

"Stella," said her aunt haughtily, "suppose that, instead of abusing me, you go and dress yourself; at present you are merely covered, like a chair or a parcel."

"You don't like the uniform?"

"You look just like Shem or Mr. Noah out of a toy ark."

"I bought some clothes in Sloane Street, on the way down," said Stella.

"Then do go and put them on. By the by, how are we to amuse ourselves?" she continued.

"Nohow," said Stella.

"Contrariwise," answered her aunt. "Do you know, before I left home I discovered that there is a large body of quite good undamaged cadets and an officer or two quartered close by, in training. I heard from one of them, who is rather a friend of mine, yesterday. I will ask him to come and play tennis, and bring another man. You have a telephone, I know."

"Telephoning is against the regulations," called out Stella, as she disappeared into the house.

"The road to happiness is paved with broken regulations," replied her aunt, and moved off in the direction of the telephone.

In half an hour she was back again in the hammock, with closed eyes and an air of duty performed. She opened them again later, upon a vision brief, bright, rose-pink—it was Stella transformed.

"Bravo, Stella!" she cried. "The chrysalis has become the butterfly. You are a vision, a triumph. 'Dress does make a difference, Davy.' Where have I seen that sentence? And what beautiful white boots! Where did you get them?" she added.

"They are your boots," said Stella briefly, moving out of earshot. "Look, look!" she called hastily, to distract attention from the boots. "Young men! Men in tennis flannels! Look—through the trees!"

"So soon!" said Daphne, pleased. "I see he's brought a cadet with him. That is Captain Jardine, and I asked him to bring a fair one with yellow hair, if possible, as you like them like that."

Two young men came into view. One head was black and shining, the other was yellow, curly.

"Here are the goods as per esteemed order," said the dark man. "This chap's name is Salmon, and he plays quite a decent game."

"Will each person present announce their own name in a clear voice, and then consider themselves introduced," said Aunt Daphne.

The response was feeble.

"Sounds rather like family prayers," said Daphne. "Stella, I am going to show Captain Jardiné round the garden. Can you and Mr. Salmon amuse each other?"

"Yes," said the youth.

"I knew you'd say that," said Daphne, as they disappeared.

Stella and Mr. Salmon sat themselves on a hard high seat that went uncomfortably round a tree.

Stella asked him questions for ten minutes, receiving sparing answers.

"Your poor aunt is a war widow, I suppose?" said the young man, after a prolonged pause.

"Oh, no, it's not like that a bit," answered Stella. "You see, she was the youngest of eight, and her father rather a poor parson. They seemed to think it would be a good thing if she married old Trotter, and so she did, and it was very self-sacrificing of her. He was rich and mean, and very like a spider to look at. She did the right thing by him—walked out beside his bath-chair, and so on. Bronchitis took him off after ten days. Now she supports the other seven parsonlets, and gives all her money to funds—except a pound or two for frocks," she added. "She has a heart of gold, in spite of looking so frivolous."

"Jolly uncomfortable," murmured the youth.

"What?" said Stella sharply.

"Heart of gold—rather lumpy and cold."

Another pause ensued. "We are not amused," she said to herself, and went in search of the others. "We really must play tennis, as this boy is evidently here for tennis, not conversation."

"They have just got to the onion bed," she sighed on her return. Fifteen more silent minutes passed. Again she went in search.

"They are praising our vegetable marrows and calling them cucumbers to their very faces," she said.

Next time she searched she came back, after a long interval, still sadder. "Gone to ground in the tomato-house," she said mournfully. "Let's have tea."

Cups rattled across the lawn in answer to a summons.

"Spinks," said Stella to the aged asthmatic butler, "go and beat the gong all round the kitchen garden, especially the tomato-house," she added with dignity.

Up and down, now near, now far, sounded the gong. It suddenly ceased. The two figures—the pearl-grey and the white and khaki—hurried up.

"Is there an air raid?" asked Daphne.

"No, only tea with the chill on," answered Stella rather coldly.

The rations were eaten to the last crumb. Daphne and the dark man chattered. The other two were rather silent.

"I love telephones," Daphne was saying. "The only trouble is, you can't see the person you are talking to."

"Must trouble them much more if they can't see you," said the fair young man. With that he got up, said "Good-bye, and thank you for a very pleasant afternoon," and vanishes from this history for evermore. Captain Jardine shortly after took his departure also.

"How dreadfully I frightened that fair young man!" said Stella. "I have quite forgotten how to entertain by word of mouth, I'm afraid. It was too bad of you not to play tennis."

"Oh, it'll soon come back to you," said Daphne. "Of course, I know Captain Jardine pretty well—at least, I met him once playing golf," she added. "And one must be interested in vegetables now—tennis is waste of time."

"H'm!" said Stella. "You shouldn't say tennis if you mean the other thing."

"Other thing?" said Daphne. "What can you mean?"

Next morning but one "dawned bright and sunny," as the books have it. At breakfast-time the telephone bell whirred noisily. Daphne ran, crunching toast as she went, to answer the call. She came back, both hands clasped over pink cheeks, eyes wide and startled. She looked right through Stella, apparently at something she saw on the other side of her.

"Captain Jardine came out in a German measles rash an hour after he left us," she said in a staccato gasp. "What shall we do?"

"Do? Eat your breakfast and don't be silly! Everyone has German measles. He won't die."

"But," said Daphne, "I shall get it—you will get it—they will all get it—the house will be full of it! We must go into quarantine."

"Stop talking like French verbs," said Stella.

"Oh!" A look of piercing intelligence dawned in her eye. Pointing an accusing finger at Daphne, she said in a strained, throaty voice: "The tomato-house!"

"Exactly!" said Daphne. "So hot and germy. Stella, I am going to find some peaceful retreat where we can go and have measles comfortably. We needn't drive everyone from this house. May I use the telephone?"

"Have you ever ceased to use it since you came, dear auntie?" said Stella. "Use it, by all means. Be sure to chalk up all the trunk calls for the pater to see," she added. "Aunt Gertrude Alice, did you or did you not kiss Captain Jardine in the tomato-house? Our fate depends upon it."

"I'll speak to you afterwards," called out Daphne, agitating the telephone bell. "Run away and play now."

Later she came to look for Stella, beaming.

"I've almost burst the telephone," she cried, with shining eyes, "but it's all settled. You and I and my maid are all going to a dear little furnished cottage I know of at Rylsea, for a week, to play golf and sketch and await developments. So pack up golfing things and your sketching kit, and be ready by two-twenty-nine."

"How——" began Stella, but Daphne had vanished.

Sounds as of persons making arrangements were soon heard in the house, but in the afternoon perfect peace fell on the Manor House, for the girls had left it.

* * * * *

There were yellow sand dunes, grey-green rushes, a blue, blue sea—miles and miles and miles of it. And Stella, seated cross-legged on the sand in an expensively artistic overall, was trying to reproduce it all on a little sketch block seven by five inches.

Suddenly, just behind her, came a sound—glup, glup, glup! Startled, she looked round quickly and met the melting eye of a black spaniel, looking at her guiltily above the rim of a little cup—the little cup which had held her painting water, now, alas, empty.

"You pig," she cried, "you've drunk all the water!"

The black spaniel snuggled up against her, lolling out his tongue, and gazed into her face, panting, grateful, apologetic.

"For a perfect stranger, you are wonderfully friendly," said the girl, putting an arm

round his fat neck. "What do you think of the sketch?" She held it up to his face. He passed his tongue across it and gulped. "Jolly good!" he obviously said. Stella gave a cry of dismay and thumped the curly back.

A voice came from behind—a pleasant deep voice.

"I say, is my dog annoying you?"

"Yes, he is. He has swallowed my sketch and the water."

"Bad taste," the voice said. "Hi, Albert, you fool dog! What dashed cheek the beast has!



"'Will all those present accepting these proposals testify the same in the

Albert!" The dog did not move his sleek head.

"Seems to have rather taken to you," the man said.

Stella looked round and up. She saw a

good-looking man, dark, apparently about forty. He wore the uniform of a private. She looked disappointed—such a nice voice for a private.

on a sheet of your paper?" he said hesitatingly. "I have painted before now."

The girl looked doubtful. A glance at



usual manner.' Four hands were held up. Four persons smiled very much."

He looked, not disappointed at all, but just as a man would look who sees a distractingly pretty girl with her arm round his dog's neck.

"Would you let me try my hand painting

Albert reassured her; he looked so very respectable.

"Do," she said, moving away and seating herself a little distance off. "There's only a thimbleful of water," she added. "Daphne

is quite near on the golf links," she thought to herself; "I can call her any minute."

Presently he brought her the sketch, obviously unfinished, but clever.

"Quite good," she said, her head on one side. "You ought to have lessons. Good afternoon."

"Will you be here to-morrow?" he asked. "Perhaps you would give me a lesson."

"Possibly," she answered; "but I shall have an aunt with me." She spoke as if an aunt were some sort of weapon.

Next morning she did chance to go sketching in the same spot, but there was no aunt. Aunt Daphne preferred golf to gooseberries, she said.

The private brought his own sketching things this time, and painted the same subject as Stella—at a discreet distance—and Stella gave criticisms. Albert lay on the ground and panted.

"Do let me carry your traps back for you," said the private at lunch-time.

"He speaks quite like a gentleman," thought Stella. "Very well," she acquiesced. "We live in the oldest cottage in Rylsea," she volunteered.

"I know it," he said—"a little sixteenth-century house in a steep street, windows looking on the street."

They walked almost in silence. It was very hot. When they arrived, Stella went up to the open window and put her head in, her new friend beside her.

Inside, in a deep armchair, was Daphne; on a footstool at her feet was Captain Jardine.

"Aunt Daphne—and Captain Jardine!" said Stella.

"Good morning," said Captain Jardine coolly.

He rose to his feet and approached the window and the soldier standing there.

"Well, dad, this is a surprise!" he said. "Where did you find Miss Richardson?"

The private saluted stiffly.

"Don't be an ass, pater," said the Captain.

"Introduce me to this lady," said the private, pointing to his companion.

"Is it necessary?" Captain Jardine looked surprised. "The lady you are escorting is Miss Richardson. The lady inside the room is her aunt, Mrs. Daphne Trotter. We are old friends," he added.

"Please will you all come in?" said Daphne. "Soon we will eat an omelette together, and all shall be made clear. In the meantime Captain Jardine will give us a synopsis of his story."

Captain Jardine took a long breath. "Dad lives here," he said. "He is an artist and a widower, and I am his one and only son. That is his house up there—that sort of crystal palace on the hill. The other day he took it into his head to think he was about nineteen, and enlist in the Artists' Rifles, and now I believe he is in quarantine. As his cook has measles, I came down here because I also had a bright little attack of German measles, and everybody wanted to get rid of me. We are putting up at 'The Fish Tail Inn,' in strict seclusion," he added. "Next, please!"

"You don't mean to say you are *the* Lindsay Jardine, the artist?" said Stella with awe. "And I have been giving you lessons!" She laughed.

"Yes," said the artist modestly. "I paint here a good deal. I came down to stay at 'The Fish Tail,' as I heard my son was there, and my housekeeper and cook are down with German measles."

"If anyone says German measles again, I shall have double hysterics with complications," said Daphne. "I am not going to be bullied to explain our presence here. Here we are, and here we are going to stay, owing to measles. Come and eat the omelette."

"What a perfectly amazing coincidence that Captain Jardine should come here!" said Stella to Daphne, as the girls went to bed that night.

"I am rather good at making coincidences happen," said Daphne sleepily, "especially with a telephone to help. Good night. I think we shall have a pleasant week."

* * * * *

It was nearly a week later.

It had been a very pleasant week, as Daphne had predicted. No four people could have enjoyed themselves more. Golf and sketching had made the sunny days fly.

Captain Jardine and his father were seated at a small table at the golf club-house. There were four cups, a white cloth, and a dish piled with strawberries. Two empty chairs leant themselves languidly against the table, waiting.

Private Jardine was deep in thought.

Captain Jardine was even deeper in thought.

"I have been trying to think," said the older man.

"So have I," said the other. "It is hard work."

"Supposing, for the sake of argument, that I were to marry Stella, and you were to marry Daphne——"

"Marvellous telepathy," interrupted young

Jardine. "I was supposing the very same thing—not only for the sake of argument."

"Let me continue. Supposing as I say, what relation should I be to you, and you to them and me, and me to them, and so on? Let's think it out. You are my son," he continued.

"So I'm told, though you look like my brother. You artists keep young so long."

"And, if you married Daphne, she would be my daughter-in-law."

"Hear, hear!" said the Captain.

"But Daphne is Stella's aunt, therefore Daphne is my aunt and my daughter-in-law, which is absurd Euclid."

"What a brain you have, father!"

"Don't keep calling me father, like the clown in a pantomime."

"Very well, fa—pater."

"In the meantime I married Stella."

"Did you?" said the Captain, surprised.

"I said 'if.'"

"You didn't," said the Captain. "Well, get on with it—they'll be here in a minute."

"As I said, if I marry Stella, then Daphne is my aunt and my daughter-in-law, and something else—isn't she?—only I can't think what."

"Don't, dad—I can't bear it," said the young man, laying his head noisily among the tea-cups.

"But it worries me—it really does."

"Have gas and have it out," said the son. "Now, give me a piece of paper and pencil, and we will have it all down in black and white. Notebook and pencil—right. Now, then, five minutes by my watch. Time, gentlemen! Papers, please. That's as far as I've got," he said, holding out a paper—

Aunt Daphne = Captain Jardine.
Niece Stella = Private Jardine.

"I believe, if I marry Daphne, I shall become your uncle, which would be very unbecoming. All the same, I mean to do it," he added, "if I can."

"I would like to marry Stella, if she will let me, and be some quite new relation to you—your uncle, I suppose," said the father. "And I will, too."

"You wait and say that in church," said the flippant son. "Pater, come and tidy your hair; you've been rumpling it up with your fingers. Leave these papers and things, then no one will take the table." He dragged his father away by the arm.

Ten minutes later, brushed, washed, and buttonholed, they came back. Horror seized them. Bent over the pieces of paper they had left were a dark head and a fair head. "Shall we bolt or face it?" said the gallant Captain, a shade paler than usual.

"I think I must be off," said the father.

"Forward, father! On to victory! To disobey me now were mutiny."

They advanced in close formation. Four pairs of eyes met and intermingled. There was a heavy silence.

"I suppose I should be your aunt," said Daphne at last to Private Jardine, her eyes bent on the paper.

"It would be splendid. Will you?" he cried eagerly.

"I should love it, but you must talk it over with Stella."

"Perhaps we might arrange it," said Stella demurely.

"We can fix these relationships up amongst us, can't we?" said the Captain, drawing his chair close up to Daphne. "Daphne, do you mind being very nearly related to me by marriage, please?"

"I think I could bear it," said Daphne.

"Will all those present accepting these proposals testify the same in the usual manner."

Four hands were held up. Four persons smiled very much.

"Tea, please, waiter!" said Captain Jardine. "After this you and I will go and telephone, Daphne—both at the same end of the 'phone this time. You two shall pay for the tea," he added, "as Daphne and I have done so much for you."

When they came back, half an hour later, the club house was deserted; but they found the other two basking peacefully on the sand.

"We have been trying to telephone to your parents," Daphne said. "Really, Stella, you should think of these things yourself! We cannot make them understand," she continued, "so we have drawn up an announcement for *The Daily Post*, which might break it to them gently. Read it."

She handed them a paper.

"A marriage has been arranged between Private Lindsay Jardine and Miss Stella Richardson, of the Manor House, Marshfields. Also between Captain Gordon Jardine, son of the above, and Mrs. Daphne Trotter, aunt of the above."

"Simply fearful!" answered Stella. "Quite unfit for publication. All those 'alsos' and 'aboves' look just like a tombstone. I think we will post it, as it is, to father and mother. It will bring them here in no time."

It did. The result was that the marriages did take place, and quite shortly.

RESOLUTION

By VALENTINE FANE

IN summer dawnings, all the long years through
I lie and hear a voice that, sad and sweet,
Calls homeward my tired heart and restless feet.
There lies a woodland floored with heaven's blue,
Where dead red leaves lie thick along the track;
But if I cannot tread that path with you,
I never will go back!

The bare white hillside slopes into the sun,
And fair below my hidden valley lies,
Enwalled with hills and roofed with shining skies,
Where soft white clouds pass ever, one by one;
Their skimming shadows flash across the fern—
But if I have to cross that hill alone,
I never will return!

Scent of crushed thyme, of gorse and sun-warmed sand,
Red roofs and grey curled smoke, dark woods and dear,
They call me still from year to passing year
With wistful voices, plain to understand,
With tender voices pleading, still in vain—
For you and I must walk there hand in hand,
If I go home again!

WHAT ROBIN NEVER KNEW

By KEBLE HOWARD

Illustrated by Balliol Salmon

I DO not, as a general thing, approve of young married women having secrets, even of the most innocent kind, from their husbands. Still less do I, as a bachelor with all the innumerable worries of a bachelor, encourage young married women to make my battered heart a repository of such secrets. In this particular case, however, one had to compromise.

Passing up Whitehall one morning, on the way to my couponless lunch, I observed, at the corner of Downing Street, a tall, bronzed young officer in mufti. He was standing perfectly motionless, regarding the passers-by with the air of a super-Diogenes. This was my young friend Captain Robin Notable, D.S.O., married some twelve months since to the charming Dahlia, and now invalided out of the Army. (I have already recorded the story of Dahlia's capitulation in the Green Park, to which a ragged urchin and a bottle of ginger-beer contributed.)

"Well, Robin," said I, "you look as though you were contemplating either suicide or emigration."

"The latter," he replied, without a trace of interest or emotion.

"Really? May one ask whither and when?"

"Anywhere," said he, "and any time within a week."

"In that case, shall we take a farewell snack at the club? I have still two coupons, and they may—but don't raise your hopes—they may, I say, have liver."

He shrugged his shoulders, thus intimating a mind that refused to discriminate between mere fish and priceless offal. I had a shrewd idea, none the less, that my last two coupons were as good as gone west.

"And what," I asked, having kissed the wee snippets farewell, "does Dahlia think of this drastic change?"

"She has not been consulted," he answered, handing back the wine list with the weary suggestion that No. 47 appeared to be a decentish wine.

"Not been consulted?" (I realised that, even though I dodged his confidence now, the No. 47 would settle my fate.)

"It's rather a painful subject," mused Robin. "Would you mind, as an old friend, dropping it?"

"By all means! By all means! Your father, I trust, is well?"

"At present, quite, thank you. But this business will be a sad blow for the poor old chap. I was saying," he repeated, setting down his glass, "that this business will be a sad blow for the poor old chap."

"Your emigration?"

"My separation from—from Mrs. Notable."

"Naturally. Naturally. Still, as it is doubtless unavoidable—— A little more potato?"

"Women," he pursued, spurning aside, with a world-weary air, the completely empty plate, "seem to revel in the destruction of the ideal. They fling away all that is best in life, all that can never be recovered, for the sake of a mere—a mere—what shall I say?"

"Whim" seemed a little trite—not quite worthy of the No. 47. So, quite at random, and with one eye on the will-o'-the-wisp cheese, I hazarded "hat."

Robin almost jumped. It was the first sign of real animation he had yet shown.

"By Jove," he observed, eyeing me with suspicion, "that's rather odd!"

"Odd? Why? I don't follow you."

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"You haven't seen her lately, have you?"

"Not, I regret to say, since you both dined with me."

"I thought not. Well, it's very curious that you should have mentioned the word 'hat.' As a matter of fact, it was a bonnet."

"Ah!" I smoothed my hair, pulled down my waistcoat, and smiled.

"There's nothing to grin about, old man. If you know anything about married life—which, of course, you don't—you must know that it is the little things, the apparently trivial and ridiculous things, that make or mar happiness. I know of a couple who decided to live apart because she *would* leave doors open and he *would* smoke a pipe that gurgled. Those are the items that tell in daily life. Dahlia and I are separating—if you want to get to the origin of the whole trouble—because she absolutely refuses to wear a certain kind of bonnet which I happened to see at a theatre one night, and realised instantly would suit her to perfection."

"What—er—what sort of a bonnet was it?"

"Does that matter, old fellow?"

"Well, from her point of view, it might."

"You're not calling my taste in question when it comes to a matter of headgear for my own wife?"

"Good gracious, no!"

"Right. It was a kind of Quaker bonnet, fitting very closely to the head. A most charming affair. Instead of which she insists on going out with me in a thing that she trimmed herself! Home-made, mind you, like jam or bread! Prattles about economy! Where's the economy in selling your house at a dead loss and paying for a judicial separation? That's a woman's notion of economy all over!"

"Preposterous!"

"Exactly. Any man would see it. But women——" He signified his utter and final despair of the sex by demolishing, at one go, a piece of cheese that would have lasted me for three meals.

"By the way, Robin, are bonnets such as you wish her to wear obtainable in London?"

"No. We tried all sorts of shops. At one place they brought out the charwoman's bonnet by way of solving the mystery. Then they offered to make a Quaker one for six guineas. I closed with the offer, but Dahlia wouldn't hear of it. She's gone parsimony mad. I argued: she argued. I insisted: she refused. Hence this packet."

He drew from his pocket a fat envelope which evidently contained deeds of importance. It was carefully sealed, and inscribed with his name and address.

"That envelope," he explained in a guarded whisper, "holds all my worldly wealth—in negotiable bonds. I got them from the bank this morning, and I am taking them to my lawyer this afternoon. Half will be settled on Dahlia for life; the other half I shall take with me as the foundation of my fortunes in a new land. How lucky it is that we have no children!"

"If you had," I ventured, "you might possibly have brought yourself to overlook the matter of the bonnet."

"No, my dear friend. It isn't the bonnet; it's the principle of the thing. There must be one head to a house, and only one. When she marched out of that hat shop, I knew, quite clearly and decisively, that all was over. Have you the time?"

"Twenty past two."

"I must rush. My appointment with my lawyer is for half-past. Good-bye, old friend. I'll try and lunch with you again before I sail."

He dashed out of the dining-room and down the stairs. I paid my bill, descended to the smoking-room, and sat down for three minutes in a quiet corner.

II.

I DID not return to my flat until ten o'clock that evening. As I entered the hall, the porter's face took on an expression of intense relief.

"Gentleman waiting to see you, sir."

"Indeed? Has he been here long?"

"Been here seven times, sir. Seems half out of his mind. Bit worse each time he called. Used dreadful language, sir, about the fifth or sixth time. Told me off properly when I tried bein' a bit sympathetic. Shell-shock, I reckon. A young fellow in our row was took just like that."

"An officer?"

"No, sir, just a corporal. Hit his wife with the fry-pan, he did."

"The gentleman waiting to see me—is he an officer?"

"Oh, I beg pardon, sir. Yes, sir. Captain Remarkable, or some such name. Insisted on being let into the flat, sir. Hope I didn't do wrong?"

"That's all right, porter; I know the gentleman."

My key had barely clicked into the latch before the door was flung open and Robin stood before me.

"Well?" he almost shrieked. "Have you got it? Have you got it?"

"Have I got what?"

"My packet, you idiot—my bundle of deeds!"

"You don't mean to say you've lost it?"

"Lost it? Good Heavens, man, should I be here if I hadn't? I missed it before I'd been at my lawyer's ten minutes. Well, I'm ruined—that's all—ruined—done for life—a beggar! Ha, ha!"

"Oh, it can't be as bad as that. You had it quite safely when you were with me at the club."

"Yes!" He fixed me with a strangely glittering eye. "Yes, I had it quite safely when I was with you at your club."

"I hope you don't mean to accuse *me* of stealing your beastly packet?"

"Not you. No. You hadn't the chance; you were the other side of the table. But what about the waiter? What about one of the other members? I always told you that was a rotten club."



"'I think,' she said deliberately, 'you've behaved abominably.'"

"Anyway, you seemed to enjoy your lunch," said I, somewhat stung.

"So I should think, considering it cost me seventeen thousand pounds."

"Phew! As much as that? What have you done? *Did* you go to the club to inquire?"

"Did I go to the club? I was back there in about three minutes after I discovered the theft. I had the whole place ransacked

from top to bottom and from cellar to roof. I had the secretary on the job. All the waiters were searched by a policeman. I wanted to call a special meeting of the committee, but they drew the line at that. By the way, where were *you* all this time? You couldn't be found."

"I left the club soon after you. I had an appointment."

"Rather queer, that. You're not generally in such a hurry to leave the club after lunch."

"Look here, Robin, if you dare to insinuate once more that I stole your rotten deeds, I shall absolutely refuse to help you any further."

He shrugged his shoulders. "Fat lot of help you've given me up to the present," he muttered.

"Did you go to the bank?"

"Of course I did. The bank was closed. They close at three since this filthy War started—nobody knows why, except the bank clerks. An orgy of tennis, I suppose. I broke a window to show what I thought of the innovation. That brought out the caretaker."

"What time was this?"

"Oh, about six. I'd wasted all those precious hours having those measly waiters stripped. I demanded the manager. The slacker had actually gone home. *Gone home*, mind you, and my seventeen thousand quid floating about the town like so much burnt paper!"

"Did you inform Scotland Yard?"

"Yes, after I'd been here. They wrote down everything I said in longhand. Have you ever seen a policeman write? They're the slowest writers in the world, the English police. They have to square their elbows and put their great faces down sideways before they can spell. Simply maddening! I told them they ought to have shorthand typists, and so they ought."

"Have you offered a reward?"

"They're doing that. My name will be in all the papers to-morrow—Agony Column, or something. I shan't dare go near the club. And as for going home and telling Dahlia——"

He sank into a deep chair and lit a cigarette—the fifth since I came in. I was very sorry for him — very sorry indeed. At the same time I could not help feeling that this shock might be the means of bringing about a reconciliation between Dahlia and himself before the matter had gone too far.

"Yes," I said gently. "Poor little Dahlia!"

"Hang it, man, don't rub it in!"

"Must you tell her?"

"She'll have to know, sooner or later."

"Why not put off telling her until you're quite certain the packet can't be recovered?"

He looked up. His eyes radiated hope, for he was young, and of a sanguine temperament.

"Would you do that?"

"I think I should. She must be pretty miserable already, Robin. I wouldn't add to her anxiety."

"No; you're right. Well, I'll be off." He gripped my hand, looking rather shamefacedly at the carpet. "I say, old chap, d'you think I went too far about that bally bonnet?"

"I'm quite certain you did."

"It was a matter of principle, you know."

"It was also a matter of principle with her."

"But if I take it all back now, and then it comes out about the money, it'll look as if I climbed down because we were paupers."

"Not a bad reason, either."

"Eh? Oh, yes. I get you. Better than the other way about—what?"

"Far better. You couldn't very well leave your wife because you'd come into a fortune, but you can go back to her because you're both poor."

"Yes," said Robin thoughtfully. "So I can. Yes, that's right."

"You'll be going to the bank in the morning?"

"You bet! I'll be there the moment the rotten place opens. And then I'll have to go on to Scotland Yard. If you hear anything at your club—— By the way, did I say anything insulting about your club?"

"Nothing to the things I've said about it."

"That's different. You're a member. That's what you pay your sub. for. Good night, old man. See you some time to-morrow."

The porter came up with the lift, and I saw Robin shove something into his hand. As the lift descended, the porter caught my eye through the glass door, and tapped his forehead with a delicate forefinger.

III.

It was exactly ten o'clock the next morning when Dahlia's maid showed me into Dahlia's drawing-room. Banks, I think, open at nine these days, but I gave Robin a clear hour, to be on the safe side.

There was no hint of tragedy in the pretty drawing-room. My wedding present ticked serenely on the mantelpiece. All was trim, and comfortable, and cosy.

I assumed, before the glass, a suitable expression for the occasion—gentle melancholy just tinged with hope. I would not, I decided, look at her too closely. Her face would be swollen with much weeping, no doubt.

Dahlia came down the stairs singing. Bluff? No! Her eyes, as she entered the room, danced with happiness. Every dimple was working at full pressure. An idiot could have seen that the girl was radiantly happy.

"Hello!" she said. "Why so glum, old thing?"

I gave her hand a tiny paternal squeeze. At the same moment, for reasons of my own, to be explained presently, I began to feel somewhat uncomfortable.

"Am I glum? You're not, anyway."

"Why should I be?"

"I don't know. I only thought——"

"You've seen Robin?"

"He lunched with me yesterday at the club."

"And he told you, of course, the tragedy of the bonnet. Wait there a sec. Don't move from that spot!"

She flew from the room, and I heard her wafting herself up the stairs. In less than two minutes she was back again, her head clothed in the sweetest little Quaker bonnet imaginable. Dahlia has just the face for a Quaker bonnet—oval, you know, with one of those darling chins. But that may all be left to the imagination.

"Well?" she said.

"Delicious!"

"You really and truly like it?"

"I've never seen you in anything that became you so well!"

She consulted the mirror—left, right, and over the shoulder. "I think," she then observed judicially, "it's rather nutty."

"So you paid the six guineas, after all?"

"Oh, dear, no."

"I understood from Robin that there was no such bonnet to be had in all London?"

"There wasn't. But I happen to know an extremely clever little milliner."

"She is, indeed. I'll give her a testimonial at any time."

"Will you?" Dahlia glanced at the door, and then spoke almost in a whisper. "Can you keep a secret?"

"Nobody better."

"S-sh! *I made it myself!*"

"Impossible!"

"But I did! I did! I did! Robin hasn't the remotest suspicion. He came home very late last night, poor old boy, looking whipped and bedraggled. I just slipped on the bonnet, and—*voilà!*"

"I'm so glad—so immensely glad, my dear!"

She heaved a terrific sigh. "Yesterday," she said, "I was the wretchedest girl in London, and to-day I'm the happiest."

"You'll be happier still in a moment, Dahlia."

"Imposs."

"Surely."

"No can do."

"But the money? After all, money is money. You can't live on bonnets."

"Money? What money? What are you talking about?"

"Hasn't Robin told you? No; I forgot. I advised him not to—yet."

"What *is* the man raving about? Has Robin lost some money? For Heaven's sake, don't stand there staring at me like that!"

"He thinks he has."

"Thinks he has? D'you mean he's gone dotty?"

"Oh, no. But he thinks he's lost all his money."

She clapped hands to her head, as well she might.

"After his tiff with you," I continued rapidly, "he went to the bank and got possession of all his money in negotiable bonds. He meant to go to his lawyers and fix everything up. In the meantime, however, he lost the lot."

"Lost the—the lot?" she faltered.

"Yes. Don't look so scared, my dear; it isn't really lost."

"Then—then who's got it?"

"I have."

"You? Why? What are *you* doing with it?"

Taking the precious packet from an inner pocket, I placed it in her hands.

"There!" I said. "I kept it to bring to you."

"But why? Why on earth didn't you give it back to poor old Robin?"

"I thought it would be a means of bringing you together. I thought it would do him no harm to have a thorough fright, and then, when you returned him his money, safe and sound, I thought he would be overwhelmed with a rush of love for you.

You see, I didn't know you'd been and made a bonnet. How could I?"

She was silent for some moments, turning the packet over and over. My fate, I realised, hung in the balance. At last she looked up, and her eyes were as hard as steel.

"I think," she said deliberately, "you've behaved abominably."

I had. There was no denying it. The only thing left for me was my hat.

"Fancy letting Robin suffer all these hours!"

"He let you suffer," I ventured.

"That is entirely our affair. I thought men stood together. I thought you were a friend of Robin's."

"So I am."

"You won't be when I tell him that you had this packet up your sleeve all the time."

"You mean to tell him that?"

"Certainly."

"Very well." I squared my shoulders and looked at her very straight. "Then I shall tell him you made the bonnet. You know his opinion, I believe, of home-made hats!"

"You wouldn't be so mean!"

"Oh, wouldn't I? You'll see. Keep my secret, and I'll keep yours. Tell him somebody found the packet and brought it back, and I'll tell him how much I admire the bonnet. But if you tell him I had the packet—although my motives were of the highest—I shall tell him that I consider the bonnet was knocked up at home, and advise him to ask you for the milliner's bill! So now, Mistress Dahlia! The worm has turned."

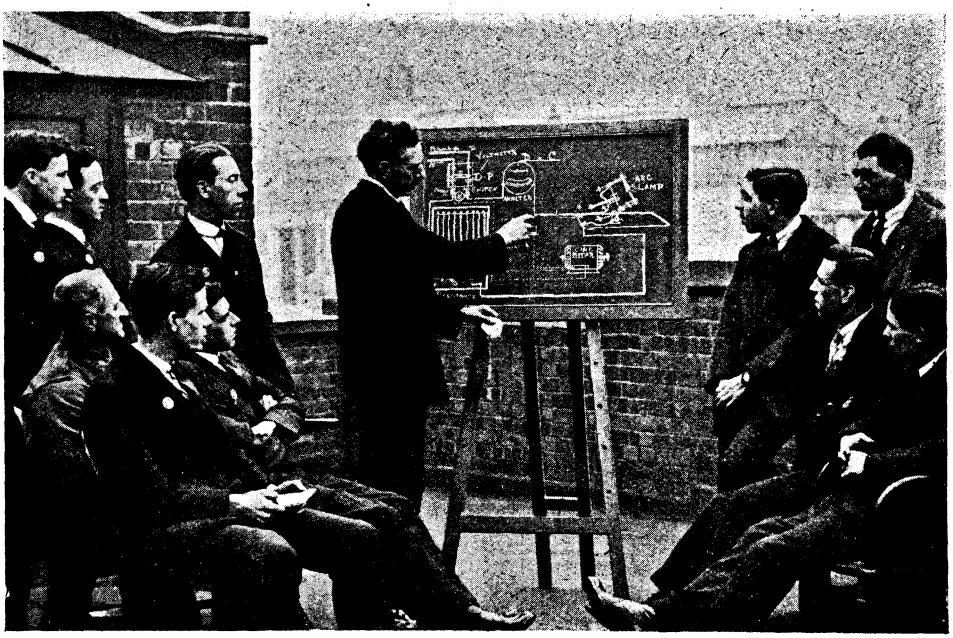
She gave me one look and stalked from the room. I let myself out of the house.

Half-way up the road, however, I glanced back. Dahlia, from a strategic position behind the bedroom curtains, blew me the tiniest possible kiss.

THE GIFT.

COULD I but gather all the joys that are
In this rich-dowered earth, when Summer flinging
Her wealth abroad, sets honeysuckle clinging
In wild-rose hedges—waves upon the bar
In sunlit foam—the music heard afar,
On sunset hills, of valley-bell a-ringing—
Lush meadows crammed with flowers—larks high-singing—
The fall of rain—the first quiet evening star:
Had I the art and knowledge magical,
I'd grip and crush them to essential wine,
And then distil it to one drop impearled
That held the joy and beauty of the world—
A gift at last to that dear love of mine
Who in her own sweet self doth sum them all.

C. de M. RUDOLF.



A LESSON IN THEORY.

HELPING OUR DISABLED MEN

CINEMA WORK FOR DISCHARGED SOLDIERS AND SAILORS

By M. OWSTON-BOOTH

THE most valuable compensation the State can make to a disabled soldier or sailor is to provide him with the means of supporting himself and dependents in an honourable trade or profession. Much, of course, is being done in every direction to give training adequate to this end, but very little is known to the public of this aspect of present things as they are.

One of the most interesting schemes for aiding both soldiers and sailors, immediately upon their discharge, is conducted by the Cinema Trade Advisory Committee, which trains, under expert supervision, for positions in various branches of technical cinema work—positions which, in spite of severe disablement, will mean a fair and increasing wage and permanent independence.

The scheme, under the name of Cinematograph Training and Employment Bureau, was inaugurated by Captain Kimberley—who is a prominent figure in the film industry—in September, 1916. At the end of the first six months no less than twenty-five men had been trained as cinematograph operators, had been placed in congenial positions, and were steadily "making good." Nineteen of these men had lost a leg—a handicap which would be of serious consequence in the majority of equally active pursuits.

In April, 1917, the Government gave the scheme official recognition, and the Cinema Trade Advisory Committee was formed still further to develop actualities and possibilities. The members of this Committee are as follows: Captain Paul Kimberley (Technical Adviser of Methods of Training); W. Barker (Barker's Motion Photography, Ltd.); F. R. Goodwin (Chairman, North Metropolitan Circuit of Theatres); J. B. Williams (Amalgamated Musicians' Union); Edward H. Mason (National Association of

Theatrical Employees); J. Kinniburgh (Electrical Trade Union); William Johnson (Hon. Secretary); and one representative each from the Ministry of Labour, War Pensions, and Statutory Committees.

The training centre in London is situated in the very centre of the cinema industry, in the Soho that has won fame, apart from its foreign traditions, lore, and customs, as the literal home and starting-point of the vast number of films, both British and American, which travel in the course of time to every city, town, suburb—and one might now say village—in the kingdom.



A LESSON ON MOTOR GENERATORS AT THE REGENT STREET POLYTECHNIC.

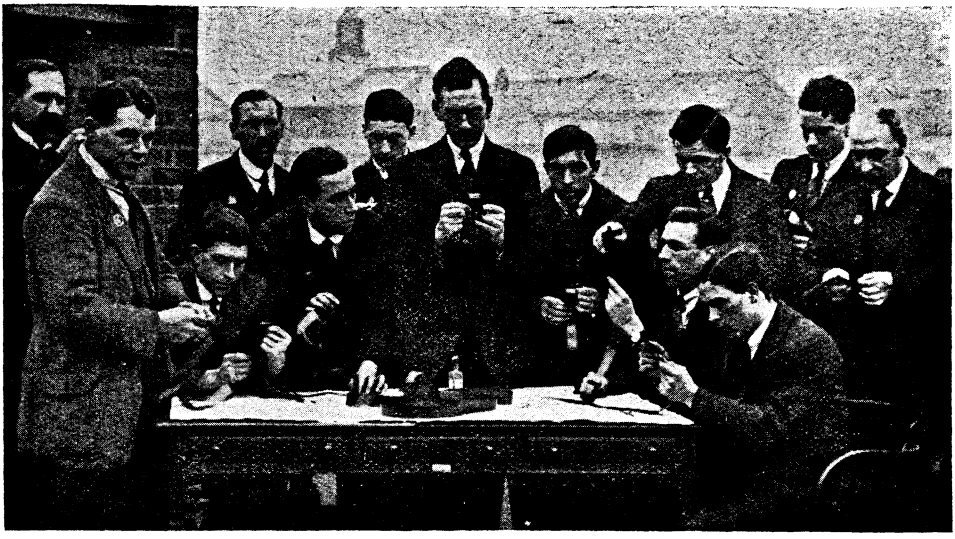
Branches, on a model of the London school, have been open for nearly a year in Manchester, Newcastle, Leeds, Glasgow, Birmingham, Cardiff, and Southampton, and all of these are steadily turning out well-trained men—men who are welcomed by the trade.

Many of them are amputation, shell-shock, and spinal cases, and even a wounded left arm has been found by no means a barrier to success, though men who have not full use of both arms are not accepted.

The demand for cinematograph operators is a large and ever-increasing one, far exceeding the present supply, and scope for an ambitious and energetic man is unlimited.

The commencing salary varies between £2 and £3 per week, and the future prospects are on a par with the rapid rise and importance of the cinema industry, which has still more potentialities than achievements. Owing to its rapid growth, operators in a great many cases have obtained their knowledge under actual working conditions as assistants or re-winders, or even film carriers, and have very little theoretical knowledge. Therefore the steady, intelligent, often well-educated man who is expertly trained and thoroughly efficient has valuable assets in the making of his career. Also, from a trade point of view, this training scheme fills a long-felt want.

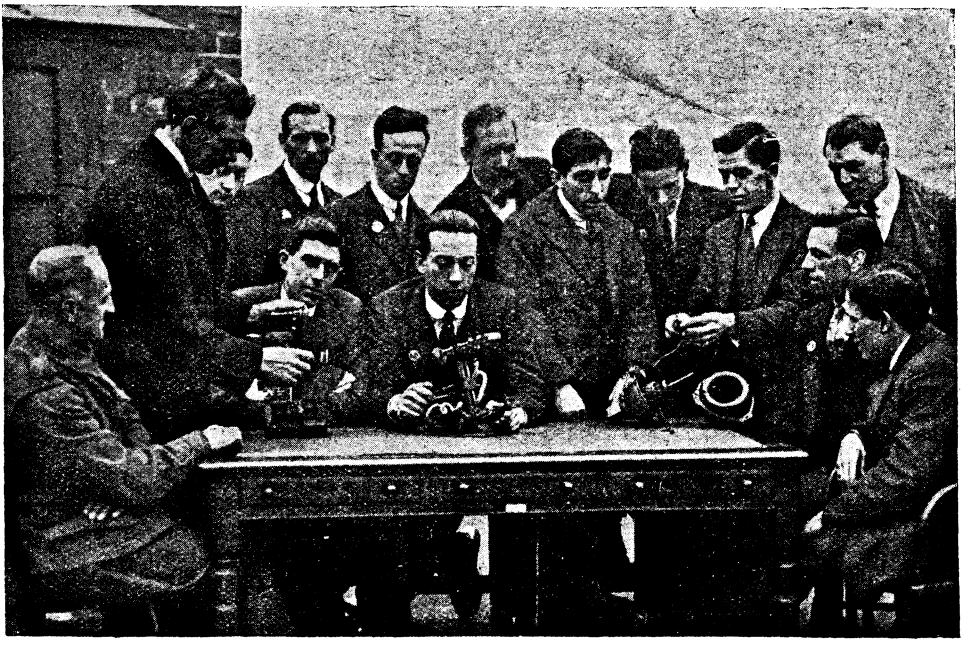
It is interesting to note the variety of trades represented by the past records of the men who, after a course of training under this scheme, are now earning their living successfully in all parts of Britain and the Colonies. Before the War they came under the following categories — shop assistants, beer bottlers, bootmakers, valets, labourers, seamen, soldiers, coal miners, jeweller's assistants, butchers, carmen, clerks, painters, gardeners, chemists, signalmen, porters,



FILM JOINING.

students, engine-drivers, photographers, chauffeurs, grooms, engineers, barmen, footmen, tailors, farmers, asylum attendants, confectioners, french polishers, policemen, car salesmen, weavers, plate-glass cutters, barbers, wood turners, and basket makers. If men are able to take up their former occupations, they are not accepted for training as cinema operators. This helps the man who has no occupation to resume.

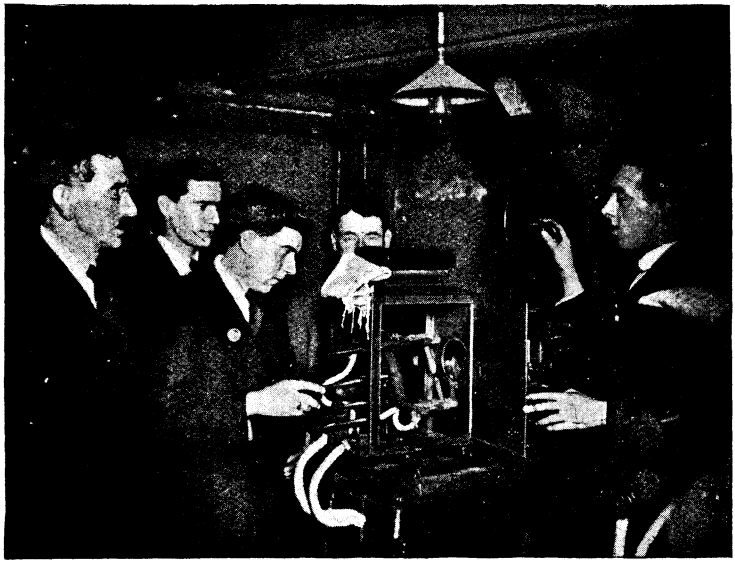
One of the "students" mentioned was the son of an author, and himself a university man. He found the work of cinematograph operating interesting to a degree, but intends to push forward to the producing side of the industry. After the War there will be a big advance in the production of British films, progress being made imminent both by the demand and the now open secret that four or more of the great American producing firms purpose making pictures on British soil. Many



A LESSON IN ARC-LAMPS, PROJECTORS, AND SMALL MOTORS.

more men, therefore, who enter the cinematograph industry as operators will be inspired to reach out and grasp the crank of the picture camera, and release for new recruits the crank of the operating machine.

Before reaching any one of the centres of the Cinema Trade Advisory Committee, a prospective pupil sometimes receives short preliminary instruction, which is valuable, not only because of the good groundwork it forms, but because of the little chance it leaves for the man to find the work uncongenial after entering the definite instruction class. At Roehampton recently the writer witnessed a number of amputation cases being interested in the cinema trade, shown the elementals of an operating machine, and given plain, helpful instruction and advice as to what the future might hold for them in this walk of life. Soon after their discharge from Roehampton those of the men who had shown a preference for this means of livelihood were sent for a personal interview with the Selection Committee, which gives active supervision to every branch of the organisation; and when it was finally decided that they were suitable for the work, they were taken into class, arrangements being made for them to receive the special training allowance which has been granted by the Government to every disabled man trained by the Committee.



IN THE OPERATING ROOM AT WARDOUR STREET.

The course of training includes special study of electricity, tuition being given in the construction and use of motor generators, switchboards, and electrical fittings in connection with cinema work. The pupil is taught how to handle films, and is made familiar with the working of different types of modern projectors. As soon as the theoretical side of this work has been mastered, he is put on to operating under actual working conditions. During the final stage of his instruction he is taken out to one of the leading picture theatres in the district, the proprietor of which will almost always throw open his operating box to provide the necessary experience in exhibiting films to the public, suiting the rate of projection to the type of drama or comedy shown and the reception it receives from the public.

At the London training centre the students have the additional advantage of attending a course of lessons, concerning the electrical side of their work, at the Polytechnic, Regent Street. They are also able to spend some time in the repairing shops of Pathé Frères, where they gain valuable experience in taking down, repairing, and reassembling the best machines on the market.

The training course takes, on an average, from twelve to fourteen weeks. At the end of this period the instructors have no hesitation in recommending the student for a good position. Before he is sent out to work, however, he has to pass a stiff Government examination, after which he receives the certificate of proficiency granted by the authorities.

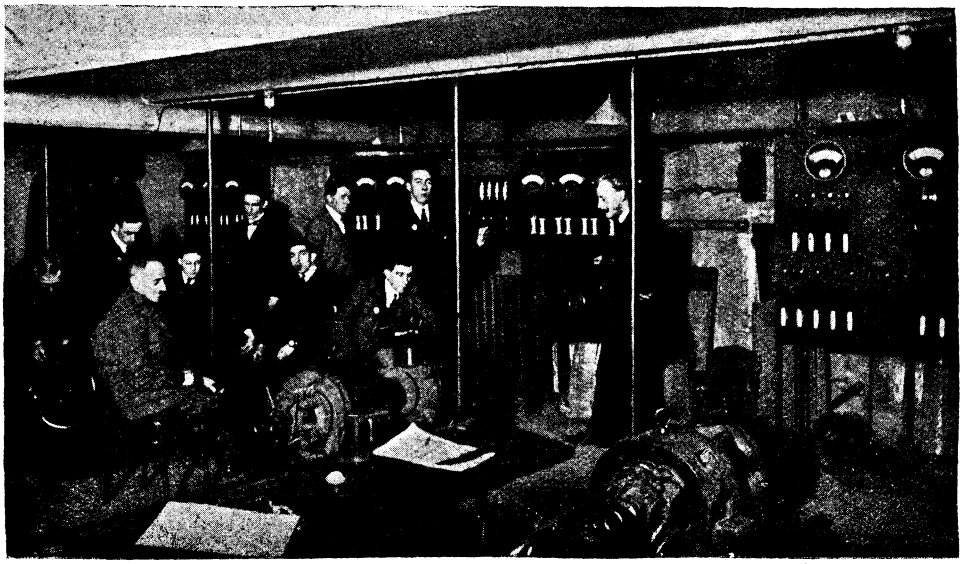
Much of the success of this scheme lies in the fact that the men are not thrown upon their own resources immediately upon severing their training connection with the school. It is remembered that these men have been in hospital for some considerable time, they have been entertained and, perhaps, a little spoilt, they are probably sensitive of physical disabilities, and altogether it is rather difficult for them to settle down into

civilian employment again. For a time any disagreeable occurrence or unforeseen difficulty will be very much magnified. But once they have settled down, there are few who do not give satisfaction and find the same for themselves in their work and prospects.

Three of the recent pupils at the London centre were men who had won the D.C.M. One of the three, now a skilled cinematograph mechanic, is in charge of the operating box which has lately been installed in the Department of Information at the House of Lords. The other two are also in good positions as cinema operators in the provinces.

War work of a voluntary nature employs the spare time of a good many of the more advanced students in the London school, who, from past experience, know the value of "the pictures" as a tonic for Tommy. The operators, for instance, who officiate at the Savoy Restaurant gatherings for wounded soldiers, every other Wednesday, are men being trained under the Cinema Trade Advisory Committee. And there are several military hospitals in the metropolis, as well as in each of the provincial towns, possessing a centre to which they and the films they show are almost indispensable visitors.

At a recent exhibition of work done by wounded and disabled soldiers and sailors, Her Majesty the Queen sat for nearly an hour viewing films illustrating the various branches of this industrial training. The wounded men from the London school not only showed the pictures for Her Majesty, and every day throughout the exhibition, but also fitted the necessary apparatus. The Queen was greatly interested, and spoke in a highly complimentary manner to Captain Kimberley and John Day, one of the instructors, who has been voluntarily devoting more than half his time to the work of training ever since the scheme first took definite shape. This happened early in 1916, when the founder of the scheme, as a member of the County of London Motor Volunteers, was brought into touch with large numbers of wounded men from the hospitals at Roehampton. Being of a sympathetic disposition, he conversed freely with many of them, discovering that the smile they always wore on public occasions was but a mask which often hid a real concern for the future. The men were wondering how they were going to live. They did not want charity; all they wanted was the opportunity to earn a livelihood as they had done before the War. These conversations led Captain Kimberley to turn the problem over in his mind, and finally he hit on the idea of training disabled men as cinematograph operators—an occupation which numbers of them could follow in spite of the injuries they had received, and for which—he knew from experience—there were many good openings. He further realised that, if these men were properly trained, they would be able to hold their



AMONG THE SWITCHBOARDS AT THE REGENT STREET POLYTECHNIC.

positions in competition with other men who were not disabled, after the War was over. Consequently, being a man of action, he lost no time in putting his ideas into practice.

He interviewed and secured the co-operation of Major Mitchell, the Director of Education at the London Polytechnic, and also talked the matter over with the hospital authorities at Roehampton. He offered to train the men at his own expense, at his business premises in Wardour Street, until such time as the scheme could receive other support. With the assistance of the editors of the three trade papers in the cinema industry, the first committee was formed, and men started coming into training almost at once.

It is only fair to add that the trade has backed up Captain Kimberley's efforts from the very commencement. Funds have been provided, and members of the industry have given the students the chance of earning a living in the new industry they have taken up by offering them positions. In the first place, this was done in a spirit of patriotism; but the men have proved their ability to such an extent that exhibitors freely admit they have "never had better operators."

From this small, almost romantic beginning, the original Cinematograph Training and Employment Bureau has developed into one of the most successful schemes that have been put in operation for the benefit of England's heroes, deciding for many a one the question that arises in the mind of every disabled man concurrently with the consciousness of his fate: "What am I going to do?"

A SONNET OF SUMMER.

BEAUTY and joy live through the summer day,
The morning rustles by my bed of dreams,
In garments made of woven auroral beams,
And toying zephyrs in the garden stray,
Shaking the dews from each rose-weighted spray
Upon the crimson poppies' burning lips.
A white-winged butterfly delighted sips
Of cooling golden wine, his thirst to allay,
The while he poises on the yellow brim
Of buttercups. And when the day is dim,
And shadows flutter in the rising gale,
And oak leaves tremble in the wood afar,
Like falling flakes of gold—o'er night's dark rail
Pale seraphs lean, each with a censer-star!

JOHN STUART THOMSON.

THE LITTLE THINGS

By M. L. C. PICKTHALL

Illustrated by Dudley Tennant

"SLANE, I'm not *sure!*"

Thorda's eyes were brighter than usual—perhaps with unshed tears—her firm mouth trembled. The lake-wind, keen as a sword, ruffled her dark hair under the scarlet toque, and flushed her cheeks. She looked delicately vigorous—a very flower of the North. But Slane Templeton was not looking at her. His heavy face was set in its heaviest lines, as he stared across the frozen water at the iron-hard hills.

"Not sure of me, Thorda?" he asked at last.

She glanced quickly at this man, whom she loved so much and feared not a little. Many people feared Slane Templeton more than a little; she had not yet learned how many also loved him. Now, something in his face that she took for hardness filled her with a certain momentary revolt.

"Slane," she said rather passionately, "we're not children. We both know what marriage will mean for us—sacrifices on both sides. And you're so used to people sacrificing things for you that you don't even know when they do it. And—it makes me afraid."

"Afraid you'd have to make *all* the sacrifices when we're married, dear?"

"Something like it," she acknowledged, trying to smile at him. Perhaps she'd expected, and even wished, that he'd just take her in his arms and put aside her doubts that way. But it was not Slane's way. He met her eyes levelly, as if he had been talking with another man.

"Thorda," he said slowly, "it's just as likely that in little things you *will* have to make most of the sacrifices. I shan't want you to, but I get busy, and then I don't notice. I know it."

"It's the little things that count, Slane." She wasn't very wise; if she had been wise, she would have valued his honesty even higher than his love.

"In the middle of civilisation," he answered, with a little smile, "I don't doubt it's the little things that count. Out here, enough of the big things are liable to happen at any moment to—well, kind of even things up. And—I won't fail you in the big things, Thorda."

"If I could be sure!"

"You never can be sure of the big things—till they happen. Ah, look there! That's what I brought you up here to see."

Thorda looked. Some three miles away, across the grey levels of the frozen lake, a flock of white birds or butterflies seemed to be breaking out from the shelter of the dark woods.

"Oh, Slane, how pretty! What are they?"

"Ice-boats. The men are coming back from the day shift. They'll pass below us here."

"They're coming from the mines?"

"That's right. The mines are behind that spruce—there, where you see the steam. The boats are putting out from the wharf where they load the ore-carriers."

They watched in silence. Sail after sail ran up behind the wharf, took the wind, and swept out into the open lake with a great curve. At first the huge white sails were all Thorda could see. Then she could make out the strange triangular framework below, mounted on three huge skates, and blackened with crowding men.

She said: "How fast they travel!" She glanced up at Slane. He seemed to have forgotten their discussion—almost to have forgotten her. His keen eyes were fixed on the rushing boats, and there was a sudden flush on his tanned face.

"By gum, Thorda," he said suddenly, "who'd change a sight like that for a whole winter of pink teas and University lectures? See the beauties! That's Jordeen's *Thunder Bird* in the lead. He's racing Fraser's *Fiona*. Fast? Not so very. They won't do the three miles under six or seven minutes on this wind. I've seen 'em do it in three and

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a half. Watch out for the turn! It's then things happen."

By now Thorda also had half forgotten herself and her doubts, gazing at that fleet of silvery sails tearing towards her. Nearer and nearer they came. She could hear the roar of the huge skates, the ring and clang and clash, as here and there a blade cleared a crack or hummock in the foot-thick ice. It was a tremendous music, and the ungainly craft were possessed with that incredible fierce beauty that waits on speed. Now the *Thunder Bird* was right beneath them where they stood on the snowy cliff. She caught the flash of the helmsman's teeth in the midst of his brown beard, as he looked up and raised a hand to Slane. A glint of raised faces, then, with a hiss and a clang, the *Thunder Bird* came about on one skate and shot off up the long frozen inlet behind them to the town.

Not five seconds after her came the *Fiona*, and then, one after another, the whole fleet swept past. Slane named them for her—*Rosaleen*, *Clair de Lune*, *Jennie Smith*, *Metawawa*, *Annie Laurie*, *Belle Aurore*, *Kamouraska Queen* — and the very names were a song. She thrilled to them, to the swish and crash of the skates, to the hum of deep voices, to the sheer magic of speed. As the *Metawawa* came about, a man was shot off the frame, and spun fifty feet away on the wind-smoothed ice before he stopped, revolving slowly with erect legs. A deep roar of laughter came back to her on the wind. The man rose, shook himself, and trotted up the inlet after the boats, shouting and laughing as he ran. She, too, laughed aloud for joy in life rough and unadorned.

"Like it, dear?" asked Slane anxiously.

"Oh, yes! I—never saw anything like it. No, I'm not a bit cold. And there's one more boat coming. Let's wait for that."

"Sure, we'll wait." Slane would have waited for an hour, so happy was he when she showed such keen pleasure in any part of the life that would soon be hers.

The last boat came on rapidly, under an enormous spread of sail. "That's Evans, the cashier," Slane told her, "on his *Silverada*. Yes, it's a beautiful boat. Painted scarlet, and has black lynx rugs. He'll take you out, if you like, She's a flier."

Beautiful indeed was the *Silverada*—all white canvas, scarlet frame, and black fur—a little glittering spume of ice-dust streaming from each speckless skate, as she flew across the granite-grey lake. Thorda watched, entranced, and Slane watched her. If she liked it so much, he'd get her an ice-boat, paint it blue, and have white fur rugs. He guessed she'd have to learn to run it herself, though—he wouldn't have much time.

It was in Thorda's face that he saw fear and horror dawn. When he looked at the lake, the thing had happened.

The *Silverada*, humming over some stretch of weakened or air-rotted ice, which the other boats had missed, had dropped through.

The picture was photographed on Slane's brain—the dark surge of water, the uptilted scarlet frame, three parts submerged among a slather of ice-cakes, one still-vibrating blade high in the air, and a dark figure that crawled cautiously up the long timber above the skate. Almost before he had seen he was sliding and scrambling down the snowy face of the cliff, with Thorda behind him, and running over the veined grey ice.

They ran as one runs in bad dreams—a slip back for every step gained. Thorda caught her breath in a sharp sob, and Slane checked, caught both her hands heavily in one of his, and bade her brace her feet firmly. "Stand so," he ordered, "and I'll pull you along. We'll make better time that way, and you may be wanted." She obeyed, with some thought in the very back of her mind of other men she'd known whose first thought would have been to spare her, to shield her from horror or tragedy. Slane? Slane was different. Did he ever spare anyone? Not if they "might be wanted."

A clear twenty feet from the ragged edge of the hole Slane stopped. "Stand here, Thorda," he said.

"Oh, Slane, let me help——"

"You'll help best by standing here till you're wanted," he broke in curtly enough. Then he lifted up his voice and hailed.

"Hello, there, Evans!"

"Hello, there, Slane!" returned the small, dark man perched above the skate, in a pleasant nasal drawl. "This is some spill!"

"Are you wet?"

"Wa-a-l," drawled Evans judicially, "I *was* wet, but now I'm set stiff. I crackle when I breathe." He smiled cheerfully at Slane, and Thorda did not notice that his lips were already rimmed with blue; for it's rather serious to cling, soaking with fresh water, to the upturned frame of an ice-boat, at a temperature of twelve below zero.

"See any more cracks openin'?" asked Slane casually.

"Not from here. But I can't turn my head."

"How's she fixed?"

"Starboard skate's resting on the mud, I guess. If I move, it sinks. She's good for an hour this way, if she ain't joggled any."

"But *you* ain't good for an hour," muttered Slane under his breath. Then he sang out: "I'm coming to look."

He advanced very carefully to the edge of the hole, whistling. Something rang as a glass will ring. He backed, went down on hands and knees, and crawled round the opening inch by inch. He was half-way round, when Thorda screamed once.

Without any sound, a great cake of ice had broken from the rim of the hole, tilted under Slane's weight, and shot him into the water.

Instinctively he dived under the broken ice that surged around the *Silverada*, and came up just beneath Evans. He hooked his arm about a strut, and remained so for a minute that was the longest Thorda had ever experienced. There was a streak of scarlet on his temple, and his face looked unusually white. Then he caught the timbers above his head and tried to pull himself erect, but the boat's frame was already sheathed as with glass. He struggled, slowly and rather clumsily, as it seemed, for a good three minutes before he got his foot on the edge of the uptilted tray and pulled himself awkwardly from the water. As he did so, the *Silverada* sank by inches under the extra weight, and left him standing to his knees in the slow, dark current that set under the ice.

He was beneath Evans. He made no effort to reach a safer hold. He looked up, and Evans said foolishly: "Hello, there, Slane! That you?" And both men laughed.

It seemed to Thorda that Slane had suddenly become weak, inefficient; even his stature seemed to have shrunken. She, the over-civilised, could have hated both men for their laughter. She rose slowly from her knees—she did not know till that moment that she had been kneeling on the ice where Slane left her—and waited.

"How are you, Evans?"

Evans looked down at the man beneath him. He did not seem to hear the question fully. His lips were blue, his face was taking the peculiar waxen pallor which Slane knew so well. The shivers which had shaken him ceased. He said dully: "It's getting me, Slane!"

"What's getting you, old man?" But Slane had no need to ask.

"The cold," whispered Evans — "the cold!"

His head sank on the ice-sheathed wood; but in a moment he lifted it, and there was a child-like fear in his heavy eyes. "I—can't hold on," he said, in a queer, drowsy voice; "I can't hold on—much longer. I can't feel anything!"

Slane's long arm came up and gripped Evans's blanket-coat. The thick wool crackled and crushed in his grasp. "No, you won't fall," he said loudly and clearly; "you won't fall—not if I'm here to hold you. I won't let go." And immediately he called Thorda.

"I'm here, Slane."

"Good girl!" She did not know how keenly he was watching her. "But what you've got to do now is to clear out."

She bit her lips. "Clear out?"

"Make tracks for the town," said Slane cheerfully. "Run as you never ran in your life, and tell the first fellow you meet what's happened. "Yell—stand on your head—turn cartwheels on the ice—anything to attract attention! Oh, and if you keep close inshore, you'll keep your feet better. Run!"

Thorda turned and ran.

She did not know that Slane's heart went with her, that somewhere in his brain was the wonder if she'd be quick enough—if he'd ever see her again. Once under the ice—— He shifted to a firmer grip on Evans's coat—motionless otherwise, for fear of sending the *Silverada's* sunken skate deeper into the mud. And the awful cold of the northern lake-water crept from his knees to his very heart.

He watched the trim figure in the scarlet toque till it was hidden by the curve of the cliff. She was doing well enough, if she could keep it up. What unimaginable bad luck, though, to be put out of action himself, and have to leave it to her!

Thorda ran as, indeed, she had never run in her life—without conscious thought. Her mind was full of terrors and dumb cries. She was aware of nothing but the veined grey ice under her slipping feet, so clear that it almost made her dizzy, as if she were struggling over depths upon depths of glass. Thank God, the wind was not dead against her, did not too cruelly take her breath. On the rougher ice she gained; now and then she fell; once, on a stretch wind-scoured to the likeness of marble, she crawled on hands and knees.

Ahead of her the town showed—so near in that translucent air that once she shouted, thinking that someone must hear. But life went on unheeding under the grey roofs,



"'No, you won't fall,' he said loudly and clearly . . . 'I won't let go.'"

in the snowy streets not half a mile away, careless of death out there on the ice. She strove desperately to run faster, but her feet would not obey her. There was an iron band across her breast; the bitter air on her lips, on her eyelids, seemed to scorch and sear. She was terrified, less of what might be happening to Slane than of the revealed nature of the land and of the life into which she had been suddenly flung. She was sick with fear. But still she ran.

Behind her, out of sight, Evans was lying motionless above the skate. His eyes were shut, his blue lips twitched with each shallow breath. Numbness was stealing over Slane. The *Silverada* settled deeper, inch by inch. He watched the stain run ahead of the water up the draggled sail and freeze instantly. There was a great rent above the reef-points. He watched a flight of crows winging to the far spruce woods that looked as black as the birds. He watched the friendly puffs



"'I'm here, Slane.'"

of steam from the furnaces three miles away. He never relaxed his grip on Evans.

Thorda had been gone ten minutes.

She was still desperately running. Her mind held only one longing—that she'd worn boots with nails in them. "Nails—in—my—boots! Nails—in—my—boots!" The words set themselves to a foolish tune. She was angry when she stumbled, because it broke the rhythm. She stumbled very often now.

A black bar of fog was hanging just in front of her. She was a town girl, not used to running. Sometimes she ran into this bar of fog for a minute, and then everything went out. Again she stumbled clear of it. But it was growing darker, denser.

She knew she was falling, but she went on. She knew she would never reach the town. But a lad sitting on the edge of a frozen-in scow in the harbour, to put on his skates, looked up, saw the unsteady

figure, and dashed in long sweeps to meet it.

Her thought, as she stumbled once more into the black fog, was that God was good.

Even in that fog she must have told her story somehow to the half-seen face bending over her, for when the fog began to clear in strands and ribbons, she saw twenty men running an ice-boat out from the shelter of the land; she saw the tall, gleaming sail trembling and filling. They were loading the tray with boards and ropes and a little flat-bottomed shooting punt. But they seemed to her to work slowly, with a maddening carelessness. Once she even heard a joke and a following laugh—a joke about the cashier.

Her friend of the skates came to her, pulled her to her feet. She stumbled to the ice-boat, and was packed aboard somehow. The *Kamouraska Queen* took the wind and sped up the inlet to the open lake close-hauled. Thorda lay flat among the men, staring ahead with her whole soul.

An early sunset stained the south crimson. The tall sail flushed suddenly blood-red, blood-red the snow on the circling cliffs, rose-red the ice. In the heart of the swift glory the gaunt frame of the *Silverada* showed drawn in black, and black the two figures still clinging to it. She nearly fainted, the relief was so great. "Squattin' above ten feet o' water like a pair o' hens!" said someone, and there was a grin.

* * * * *

The *Kamouraska Queen*, drawn up fifty feet clear of the hole, headed back for town, the tall sail trembling in waves of rose and crimson and gold of the bitter skies, the little black crowd on the ice, the matter-of-fact voices calling cheerily.

"Hello! Hello, boss! You want help?"

"Looks like it! Hurry up, boys! Evans is all in."

A foreman took leisurely command. They broke down the dangerous ice with bars and axes, and launched the punt. The foreman and another poled through the loose stuff to the *Silverada*, deeper sunken now, and tilting her port skate to heaven. They lifted Evans off the strut and lowered him into the boat as if he had been a sack of corn. But first they had to loosen the grasp of the hand that had kept him there as if it had been the grasp of the dead.

"We have him," Thorda heard the foreman saying. "Easy now, boss, and we'll have you. Drop! We'll steady you."

She heard Slane answering in a strange, hesitating voice. "Sorry, boys," he said, "but I guess you'll have to lift me down, too. My other arm's broken. That's why I couldn't get Evans ashore." And as he spoke he dropped forward across the strut as if he had been shot.

* * * * *

They got him also into the punt, and poled them to the firm ice, and lifted them out carefully into blankets, and filled them with whisky, and put them aboard the *Kamouraska Queen*. As the tall sail filled for the homeward run, and the skates began to hum their song of speed, the sun sank. The sail became a pyramid of pale silver, the crowded boat a ghost that fled through a twilight of pearl to an unvisioned shore.

A lovers' twilight! Thorda crouched beside Slane, trying to bring life back to the strong hand that had never before lain unresponsive in her own. His other arm was tied to a stick. They were going to 'phone from the wharf to the mine doctor. But the men regarded it as a concession to her weakness. They all told her Evans and the boss would be "all right, just as soon as they get the cold outer them." She was grateful, trying to believe them—trying to believe that "a bust bone or two ain't nothin' to worry at." But the tears came at last with a rush when Slane opened his eyes and looked at her—clearly, collectively, but from a somewhat far distance.

She lifted his sound hand and kissed it in the kind twilight.

"Thorda!"

She leaned nearer, laughing very tremulously. "Slane," she whispered, "Slane, dear, I—I don't mind about the little things. I'll trust you in the big things—with my whole life, Slane!"

He stared at her hazily at first. Then recollection came back. In his keen, honest eyes dawned astonishment that swept them clear of even the shadow of pain.

"Why—but——" he burst out. "Thorda! Why, bless you, dear, but—*that* wasn't a big thing!"

The skates sang their tremendous song. Ahead, in the pale, pure twilight, the first star hung above the town like a lamp of love.

THE WALL

By J. B. HARRIS-BURLAND

Illustrated by Howard Van Dusen

OF course, there was a time when everyone knew precisely what lay behind the wall. Holly Lodge had been empty for six years, and the garden had run wild. The grey stone wall was barely four feet in height, and of considerable thickness. One could in those days lean one's arms comfortably upon the top of it and get as pretty a picture of Nature's "reversion to type" as anyone could desire. The cultivated flowers and fruit trees had very nearly gone back to the wild plants from which they had been originally bred. What they lacked in culture they had gained in strength, and even in their fierce battle with the weeds they had not been conquered. One could see strawberries the size of peas, gooseberries no larger than currants, plums that were rapidly approaching the size and bitterness of a sloe, and flowers that had dwindled to the despised but very beautiful wild things that any child can pick from a hedgerow. The garden was just about half an acre in extent, and the gravel paths in it were hidden with a huge growth of weed. In the centre there was, or had been, a lily pond with a stone paving about it. Pond and paving, at the end of six years' neglect, had vanished—each year I had looked on the process of swift effacement—so that at last one could only trace their position by the tall water-dock and willow-herb and other sturdy plants that grow in ditches by the wayside.

Well, that was the garden of Holly Lodge as I knew it for six years—just a wilderness where every plant, however long and splendid its pedigree, had to fight for existence. And then one Sunday morning, as I passed the place, I saw that the rotting notice-board, from which half the letters of "To Be Let or Sold" had been obliterated by wind and frost and rain, had been removed.

In a small country town, where everybody knows or wishes to know everything about other people's business, such an incident is of more importance than a murder in a big city, and there was much talk about the Mortimores before they arrived. After their arrival—well, I am going to tell you about that. But, first of all, I want you to understand that there was nothing against the people except that no one knew anything about them. Mr. Mortimore had purchased the property from old Billings, our grocer, and, as seven hundred pounds had previously been refused for it, it was certain that Mortimore was a capitalist to that extent, at any rate. He was a man of about fifty, rather undersized, with a mild face and spectacles, and that pale yellow straggly kind of beard that somehow or other always suggests incompetence. His wife was a faded little woman with a gentle voice and wistful grey eyes. There was a servant—a great strapping woman of thirty, with red cheeks and dark hair, and hands that were rough with housework. And then there was the daughter—a slim girl of twenty-three—and when I tell you that I wondered how such a wondrous flower had blossomed forth from such poor and weedy stock, you will understand that, from the very first moment I set eyes on Anne Mortimore, she attracted my attention. I had never thought in that way about any other girl in Gotherington, though, Heaven knows, some of them were pretty enough, and had the plainest of parents.

Well, now, about the wall. I did not, as a matter of fact, make the acquaintance of the Mortimores until they had been for two months in the place, but the building up of the wall commenced long before their arrival. Four sturdy labourers began to clear up the garden from end to end, the day after the notice-board had been removed, and before they had done so much as two days' work on it, the masons came and began to add to the height of the wall. There is no doubt that it was too low, for one likes a little privacy in one's garden. But when it had reached the height of seven feet—I put it to you that that is a very respectable height

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for a garden wall—and there was still no sign of any neat finish to the top of it, I stopped one day, on my way to Long Easton, and spoke to the foreman about it.

"Twelve feet, sir," he said. "Them's my orders—like a bloomin' prison, ain't it?—and broken glass at the top."

I suggested that the thickness of the wall would not carry the height, and he spoke of buttresses, and, since I was not the only curious person in Gotherington, he said rather sharply that "Folk ought to know their own business best." For his own part, he'd never built such a wall before, and hoped he wouldn't have to do it again, unless it was on some desert island where there was no one to ask questions about it.

By the end of that summer the wall grew to its appointed height, and Gotherington had made up its mind that the new owners of the property were queer folk. It was even whispered that they "had something to hide," and that the wall was going to hide it. "Whoever heard of such a thing?" And there would have been much more talk of this sort if the Rector had not said that he had often longed for such a wall himself—only he would have built it of brick—so that he could shelter his garden from the wind, and grow some really tolerable peaches in the open air.

I am a solicitor, and perhaps a little cautious, but I certainly think that, if I had been in Mortimore's place, I would not have set quite so striking a scene for my entrance into the social life of Gotherington. I would have first shown myself, and then have started to build the wall, explaining why I wanted to spend so much money. But Mortimore allowed himself to be judged and condemned before he set foot in the town, and made his entrance on a stage that the audience had already decided to be only fit for a villain. It was, you know, like the Demon's Cave in a pantomime. One keeps one's eye on the floor, looking for the upward shoot of the Red King,

So it came about that, when the Mortimores did arrive at Gotherington, they entered what looked very like a hostile camp, and for a little while no one held out the hand of friendship to them. It was not really until Gotherington recovered its sense of humour that anyone, except the Rector and his wife, called at Holly Lodge. Then everyone began to laugh at their own suspicions. There could be nothing wrong about these two middle-aged nonentities and that very beautiful young girl. So people began to call. I gave them credit for sincere repentance, but I am afraid that there was just a little curiosity on their part—a desire to get inside the house and see the garden.

The calls were returned, and then Mr. and Mrs. Mortimore retired into their shells. They refused all invitations on the plea of ill-health, and as no one found them of any interest, no one cared very much. The daughter, on the other hand, took her part in the social life of the little town. I met her at a dozen houses, and there soon came a time when I wished to meet her every day, when I thought of very little else but the chance of seeing her—when my heart beat more quickly at the touch of her hand.

I think everyone was very disappointed to find out that there was no mystery whatever about the wall. Mr. Mortimore, it appeared, was a keen gardener—I think he called himself a horticulturist—and his hobbies were cross-fertilisation and an attempt to grow semi-tropical plants in the open air in England. He had built the high wall for shelter, and all through the winter workmen were busy putting up lean-to greenhouses along the sunny side of it—that was the side that faced the road. I saw the men myself, and later on, in the spring, I saw an army of gardeners at work. After that I did not go inside the four high walls until the 12th of June. On that date, to the surprise of everyone in Gotherington, the Mortimores gave a garden-party. There was, I believe, not a single refusal of the invitations. Even old Mrs. Berry, who was paralysed, and had not left her own house or grounds for five years, was wheeled out in a bath-chair, pulled past the house into a portion of garden that was not enclosed, and taken as far as the small door in the high wall. Here it was found that the bath-chair could not go through the opening, and she sat there all the afternoon, staring with those clear black eyes of hers at the sunlit lawns and the blaze of flowers.

Of course, Mortimore had worked miracles with that half acre of ground, and he must have spent enormous sums of money on it. A garden practically makes itself, in the course of years, at very little expense to the owner. But Mortimore's garden had been made in eight months, and it already looked what the house agents call "old-established." The lawns were beautiful, the new shrubs of quite a decent size; the herbaceous plants were, of course, not very tall, but they were a blaze of colour. Curious plants were already in blossom—green and white and yellow and

pink—in the glass houses. Stone had been purchased by the ton, and there was a fine rock garden. There were paved walks, and steps, and low stone walls, and in the centre the old lily pool, enlarged and bordered with stone. Nothing was lacking except trees and that spaciousness which is only a matter of acreage. As it was, everyone said, "What a gem!" and they said it so often that Anne could hardly refrain from laughing at the constant repetition of the words.

I shall always look back on that day as one of the radiant days of my life. For it was then that I made up my mind to ask Anne to marry me. Of course, I could not do so in that crowded patch of ground. The whole burden of the entertainment was on her shoulders, and she worked till she was pale and tired. Her parents simply sat in the shade of the wall, like two quiet little dolls. Mrs. Mortimore hardly spoke at all, only a few formal words of greeting. Her husband spoke of his garden—and of the wall.

"The only shade we've got," he said to me. "I think I was right to build it so high."

At seven o'clock the garden was empty, save for myself and the Mortimores. I stood with Anne by the lily pool, on my way to the door in the wall. Love-making was, of course, impossible. I glanced at the house and noticed for the first time that not a single window on the first floor overlooked the garden, and yet I could have sworn—yes, there had been a window there, but it had been bricked up. If it had not been for those two quiet dolls in the shade, it would have been an ideal place for lovers. But there they were, and they were watching us.

"Anne," I said gently, "will you come out on the river with me to-morrow?"

"I'd like to," she answered, with a laugh.

It was not until I had left the place, and was walking towards home, that I suddenly wondered why she had allowed me to call her by her Christian name. I had never done such a thing before, and the name had slipped out of my mouth before I could stop it.

She had made no protest. I walked as one might conceivably do if one had wings to take the weight of one's body from the ground.

Then I told myself that I was a fool. Was Anne the sort of girl to hurt the feelings of anyone?

II.

ANNE refused to marry me. I don't think I need talk very much about it. She confessed that she cared for me—just a little—and that, if she saw more of me, she might grow too fond of me. She did not want that to happen, and she had thought it better to let me know as soon as possible that she did not intend to marry anyone. She had to live with her father and mother. They were both very feeble—practically invalids. They could not get on without her. No, it was not a sacrifice on her part; it was not entirely her duty. It was a pleasure. She made it quite clear to me that I was not to look upon her as a martyr.

I told her that I would wait—that she would change her mind—that so long as there was no one else—well, I said just what every ordinary man would have said under the circumstances. I am not one of those forceful heroes who can break down obstacles by sheer strength of will, but I spoke the truth when I said that I could wait. And by "waiting" I did not mean that I intended to sit patiently with folded hands, hoping that she would change her mind. The kind of waiting I had in view was rather that of a general who watches for his opportunity. You see, I knew that Anne cared for me more than a little, and that there was some definite reason for her refusal to marry me. She evidently did not intend to tell me this reason, and so I should have to find it out for myself. Then, perhaps, I could deal with the situation.

I expect you will think that there was more of the lawyer than of the lover in me, but every man has a right to deal with difficulties in the way best suited to his abilities. If you knew me, you could not picture me in a scene where I was the strong man forcing an unwilling woman to tell him the truth, and using her love for him as a weapon. I am not that sort of man at all.

I am in the habit of taking my holidays in July, but this year I arranged with my partner to go away for September. Except for this, my love affair had no outward effect on my normal life. Landon was very nice about it. He was a married man, and rather fancied September, because he only had his children with him for half the month, and rooms at the seaside were cheaper than they were in August. However, he said that he'd try August for a change, and I believe, when he had settled on the change of programme, he felt that he had done the right thing. At

any rate, he spoke to me of "giving the kids a full month at the sea."

It was Anne and not I who fled the battle-field. Two days after the episode on the river she left Gotherington to stay with some friends in Yorkshire. I did not hear of her departure until nearly a week later, when I called at Holly Lodge. The big, red-faced servant gave me the information at the door. Mr. and Mrs. Mortimore were at home, but were both ill and unable to see visitors.

This was really the first evidence that confirmed my suspicions about Anne's refusal to marry me. It was not true that she could not leave her parents, and I very much doubted if they were ill. I do not think, if they had been really ill, she would have gone to Yorkshire. They simply did not wish to see me.

And, before three weeks had passed, it appeared that they did not wish to see anyone. To every caller the servant gave the same stock reply. There were no more garden-parties, and I do not believe anyone entered the house. And yet—this was the oddest part of the matter—no doctor in Gotherington or the neighbourhood was attending the Mortimores. I found that out from old Dr. Appleby, who has a keen eye for patients.

It was during those three weeks that the singing began. I first heard it a fortnight after Anne's departure. It was a warm evening, and the moon was nearly full. After dinner I strolled along the road that led me past Holly Lodge. The house was just a little way out of the town and on a slight eminence, so that the grass rose sharply from the road to the bottom of the high wall. In the old days this grass had not been fenced in, though it was part of the property. Now for the first time it had been enclosed with a tall spiky iron railing—the kind of railing that no one can climb over.

I was examining the thick vertical bars of this palisade, when a woman began to sing. The voice was not very powerful, but of rare quality, and there was a sweetness about it that even musical critics cannot describe in words. It spoke to one as the voice of the great singers so often fail to speak. I know too little of music to tell you if the voice was well trained. I only know that it gripped me and held me there until it had died away into silence. And I could not tell you what the woman was singing. I think she must have been too far away for me to hear the words. I certainly had never heard the air before, but it was full of sadness, and there were tears in my eyes. A voice must have strange power if it can move one like that.

I stood in the road for a few minutes under the shadow of a tree, but I heard nothing else. I walked on for a mile, and then returned and listened. But no sound came from the house or garden. No light was visible in any of the windows.

"Mrs. Mortimore," I said to myself, as I walked home. Of course, it could not have been the servant, and there was no other woman in the house. Anne might have sung *like that*, but she was in Yorkshire. It could only have been Mrs. Mortimore. And yet, somehow or other, one did not connect Mrs. Mortimore with music. But it was quite possible that she could sing like that. Among the birds those of the dullest hues are the finest songsters.

Yet why should she sing like this—in the garden? So far as I could remember, there was not even a piano in the house. Sometimes a man or woman will sing for sheer joy. But this melody—so inexpressibly sad?

The next evening I walked again along the same road, and again I heard the singing. The air was different this time, and the voice seemed louder, but there was still the same note of sadness—no, I do not think it was quite the same. At times the music was almost a cry of pain.

On the third night I was waiting there in the moonlight, and I had the misfortune to meet my partner, who was bicycling home from Long Easton.

"Hello!" he said, as he jumped off his machine, and his feet grated on the road.

"A jolly night," I replied.

"H'm, yes. I say, that's a fine bit of fortification, isn't it?"

I glanced at the palisade and then at the high wall with its crown of broken glass, but I did not answer him.

"No lover could scale that," he said, with a chuckle. "Oh, you rogue! I'm not blind. The prison is empty, but you like to come to look at it in the moonlight."

I don't know what reply I might have made to this—something rather unpleasant, I'm afraid—but at that moment there was a sound like the crying of a fretful child—some two-year-old baby, perhaps. And I heard a woman say: "H'sh, darling, h'sh!"—as if trying to comfort it.

Then the crying suddenly stopped, and the woman began to sing the song I had heard on the first night. I watched Landon's face as he listened to it. There is nothing

sentimental about Landon, but I saw his upper lip quiver.

"Mrs. Mortimore," I said, when the song had come to an end.

"Does she sing?" he queried.

"Yes," I answered. "Didn't you know that? Come along. It's getting late."

I wouldn't talk about this. The Mortimores are queer folk, but Miss Mortimore——"

"All right, old chap," he said. "I think I understand. Good night."

He left me, and I let myself into my house. The thought uppermost in my mind had remained unspoken.



"'Who is this?'"

As we walked back together, Landon was very silent. It was not until he stood outside the door of my house that he spoke without being given a question to answer. Then he said: "Is there a baby in that house?"

"Yes," I answered. "Look here, Landon,

III.

THE next night it rained hard, and not a sound came from the garden but the patter of drops on the glass roofs of the greenhouses. For a week we had villainous weather, but night after night I made my way down the road to Long Easton, and

stood by the wall. I found no pleasure in the business. In fact, to tell you the truth, I was horribly afraid. How was it that Anne had never spoken of this child? Why was it that she had refused to marry me?

I heard nothing during the week, and I caught a very bad chill, which kept me in bed for three days. Dr. Appleby attended me, and on his last visit—so I hoped—he said, just before he was leaving: "They have a doctor—those folk at Holly Lodge."

"Who is it?" I asked.

"Walton, from Exeter. I saw him coming out of there the other day, as I drove past."

"From Exeter, eh?" I said slowly. "That's a long way."

"Yes, he came in a car," Appleby replied. "Of course, he may have been just a friend."

A week later I was at the office, and the very next day I met Anne in the High Street. She asked me in to tea, and when I hesitated she said: "It will hurt me very much if you refuse."

So I went in to tea, and Mr. and Mrs. Mortimore were very pleasant and kind to me. And in the corner of the room there was a new piano. I blinked my eyes as I looked at them. It was as though I had asked a question which I expected no one to answer, and the reply had been suddenly flung in my face.

I remember that, after tea, I asked about the garden, and that Mr. Mortimore, started on his favourite topic, talked incessantly for twenty minutes. Then he carried me off to see a new plant.

"A Dr. Walton, of Exeter, gave it to me," he said. "He brought it down the other day in his car."

We went into the enclosed garden and looked at the plant. It was a miserable little spiky thing, such as horticulturists love, and its chief merit appeared to be that it had never survived a winter in the open air of England. For myself, I was more interested in the boundary of the high wall—in the fact that here I was standing, perhaps, on the very spot where the woman had sung so sweetly in the moonlight. I could see the elm tree under which I had waited on the road. There was something strangely fascinating in being on the right side of the wall, and calling up the memory of the long hours I had spent on the wrong side of it.

Well, Mortimore took me all round the garden, and was in high glee over the growth of certain delicate plants.

"It's that wall," he said. "The place is a sun trap—so little ground and such a high wall."

And, just as he said that, I saw something lying in one of the flower beds, and stooped to pick it up. It was a doll's shoe—about an inch and a half in length—exquisitely fashioned. Mortimore was walking in front of me at the time, and he turned and saw me with it in my hand.

"One of the children must have dropped it," he said. "Our servant had two of her little nieces here the other day. They were playing with one of Anne's old dolls."

I gave him the tiny shoe, and soon afterwards we returned to the house. Anne was playing the piano, but stopped as we entered the room.

"Please go on," I said; "I am so fond of music."

And, as I spoke, I glanced at Mrs. Mortimore. She was knitting quietly in her chair, and did not even raise her head.

"I am no performer on the piano," Anne answered, with a smile.

"Perhaps you sing?" I queried.

"Never," she replied firmly.

I glanced at Mrs. Mortimore. I was determined to get at some part of the truth—as decently as possible.

"Does your mother sing?" I queried.

For a few moments there was silence, and then Anne, who was looking at me in rather a curious fashion, smiled. But it was Mrs. Mortimore who answered my question.

"I used to be very fond of singing," she replied gently; "but now I am very feeble, and it is a great strain."

"My wife," said Mortimore, "has a beautiful voice, but she never sings in public. Sometimes, I dare say, Mr. Cooper, you have heard her singing in the garden."

"Yes, once as I was passing," I said untruthfully. "Mrs. Mortimore, won't you sing us something now?"

"No, please don't ask me," she said peevishly. And then she began to cry, and, rising from her chair, left the room.

Mr. Mortimore apologised. "My wife is not at all well," he said. "I ask you most humbly to excuse me." And he left the room. Anne was flushed and agitated.

"Anne, dear!"

"Please go—please! I ought not to have asked you here. You did not wish to come—you were right."

I shall always look back on that moment as the turning-point in my life. Every gentlemanly instinct told me to leave the house at once, without another word. But,

instead of that, I caught hold of Anne's hand and drew her close to me and took her in my arms.

"My dear little Anne!" I said, and she burst into tears.

"You do love me," I insisted. She did not answer, but she did not protest when I kissed her. Things were moving forward with a vengeance. All my plans of waiting and watching had come to nothing, and her powers of resistance seemed to have broken down.

"You are in trouble, Anne," I said gently, "and I want to help you."

"Oh, this is shameful of me!" she said. And she freed herself from my arms. I would not hold her against her will.

"You have heard the singing in the garden?" she said.

"Yes," I replied, "and the crying of the child."

"I wish we had never come to this gossiping little town," she said, after a pause. "But there is no harm in my mother singing in the garden."

"None at all," I replied. "Anne, you must marry me."

"I told you it was impossible."

I explained to her that things were different now. Before, it was merely a question of her getting to care for me. But now the mischief was done. The happiness of young people could not be sacrificed for the sake of those who were getting old. I spoke to her quite plainly. I think my arguments were unanswerable. At any rate, she said she would think over the matter. She would give me a definite reply a fortnight hence, if I would meet her in the road outside her house at nine o'clock in the evening.

"There will be a moon," I said, with the smile of one who has conquered.

"It does not matter," she replied. "There will be shadow under the trees. No one will see us."

* * * * *

It was five minutes to nine when I reached the meeting-place, but Anne was waiting there for me. The moon, already full, was shining in a clear sky. In the sharply-defined shadow of the trees she allowed me to take her in my arms and kiss her. Her lips were very cold, and, though it was a warm night, she was shivering. I asked her if she had come to a decision.

"Jack, dear," she said in a low voice, "I am going to leave the decision to you. I am afraid—too weak—a coward, I suppose."

"Well, you know *my* decision," I answered, with a laugh.

Anne did not answer me. She began to cry.

"My dear little Anne!" I whispered, and there were many tender words on my lips; but before I could utter them, the voice began to sing.

"Anne," I said, "your mother is one of the great singers of the world."

"Come into the garden," she replied. "I have something to show you."

She took me by the arm and led me across the road and through the gate, and round the house until we stood by the door in the high wall, and all the time we walked to the sound of that wonderful voice.

"We must not disturb her," she said in a whisper. "Father built this wall so that no one should see her or disturb her."

She opened the door, and we slipped through into the shadow of the wall. A large part of the little garden gleamed white in the light of the moon. By the lily pool a tall, big woman was standing with her back to us, and I saw from her dress that it was the servant. Close to her, and no higher than her waist, there was a little white object, almost square in shape, save for something large and circular on the top of it. I had stared at it for several seconds before I realised that the thing was alive. The circular ball was a head, and moved; two little sticks of arms shot out from its side, and one of them beat time.

The notes of the song trilled gloriously. I could hear the words now. There was no sense in them—they were just words. I stood there in silence until the song had come to an end. Then I said: "Who is that, Anne?"

"Ruth—my sister," she replied. "She has been an idiot and deformed from birth. A Dr. Walton, from Exeter, comes to see her now and then. My father and mother do not wish anyone to know of her existence. This high wall was built so that she could get air and exercise without being seen. She is like a child in her ways. She is fond of dolls—and singing, but she will only sing in the moonlight. She sings, and then——"

I saw the little white figure fling itself down and move about on its hands and knees, and it was crying like a little child. I took Anne by the arm and led her out of the garden, and we almost ran into Mr. Mortimore.

"Who is this?" he asked feebly.

"Mr. Cooper wishes to marry me," the girl replied. "I told him it was impossible. I thought he had better know the truth."

"Marry Anne?" Mr. Mortimore repeated slowly. "My little Anne?" Then he closed the door and set his back against it. "And now," he said softly, "you no longer wish to marry Anne?"

"All this makes no difference," I replied.

"Insanity in the family?" he queried. "No difference?"

I shuddered. I could not help it, with that pitiful sound forcing its way through the wall.

"I have only one daughter," Mr. Mortimore continued, "and she is in there. Anne—we both love Anne—we adopted her when—when it was quite certain that—that my daughter——"

The poor fellow broke down. Anne took him by the arm and led him back towards the house.

"I meant to tell Anne the truth," he mumbled, "if ever she wanted to marry. Oh, yes, I did—I really did, Mr. Cooper. Please believe me. I am very feeble. I have had a great deal of trouble."

We stood by the back door. There was silence in the garden. But Anne was crying bitterly, and Mr. Mortimore was muttering to himself.

The door in the garden wall opened, and I stood aside as the big servant carried a white burden past me in her arms. The queer, crooked little thing had the face of a gargoyle. I closed my eyes and thought only of the song that had once moved me to tears. Some people in the world would have given their souls for such a voice.

Two months later I married Anne. You must not blame her for leaving her home. For the best part of her life—those years of early womanhood—she had looked upon herself as beyond the pale of marriage. It was only fair that she should have some share of the world's happiness.



NOONTIDE.

BY BIRKET FOSTER.

A WATTEAU SHEPHERDESS

By A. M. BURRAGE

Illustrated by Balliol Salmon

IT was such a night as that night in Portia's garden when Lorenzo and Jessica sat on a moonlit bank and talked delightful nonsense. The sweet breeze did gently kiss the trees, and they did make no noise. That same breeze, a stronger current in mid-air, shepherded soft white flocks across the sky, and through them and between them the moon looked down straight into the face of Reggie Caverner.

That young man, returning the fixed stare from above, walked into a drooping tangle of hawthorn boughs overhanging a high hedge, and cut short a train of pleasant thoughts with a mild oath. He halted and wiped dew and gossamer from his right cheek and forehead.

"Now," thought he, "where are we? Not that it really matters, but one is naturally curious. Berkshire? We should have got further than that by now. Wiltshire? Hardly. I should have said Surrey, by the look of those hills, only we don't touch Surrey. *En avant, mon brave!* This is Arcady, and the night is young."

An hour since Caverner had woke up in the train to find that it had stopped. A fellow-traveller supplied the information that there had been an accident to a goods train in front, that the line was blocked, and that some hours must elapse before it would be possible to proceed.

"It's a bit of a nuisance, of course," said this philosopher, "but it might be worse. We're not very far from some junction or other, the guard says, and they'll be sending coffee and stuff along. Better try and get some more sleep."

Caverner, looking through the window, thought otherwise. Moonlight and wooded hills lured him out to take what he had intended to be a short stroll. Now he had walked a couple of miles, and lost himself as completely as a stranger in the Australian bush.

But it did not matter. There was magic abroad that night. In leafy coppices along the byways were bearded fauns, not quite to be seen, for sure, but to be glimpsed by the tail of Caverner's eye in passing. For to some folk, on such a night, the old immortals prove their immortality and give the lie to that sea-borne voice that cried the death of Pan. Moonbeams become fairy ladders, and the little soft shy thing that flies to seek concealment in rustling grasses is something less earthly than a rabbit.

Caverner wandered on under the spell of the night. He was an imaginative young man with a taste for idylls. "You cannot," his father had said bitterly, "do anything with a man who, late in the twenties, still reads Hans Andersen for pleasure." It was the cry of a successful business man who knew the Stock Market so well that many suspected him of clairvoyance. And yet Reggie Caverner, gifted with what his father called the luck of fools, had made money. Moreover, he had exchanged some hard knocks with the world and still remained a little boy who stood often at the threshold of enchanted doors.

"Now," he reflected, bending his head beneath another hawthorn bough, "if there were any romance in the world outside books and dreams, what would have happened to-night? Instead of my wandering alone, I should have met Her. She would have been on the train, and felt moved, like me, to come out into the moonlight. I should have—— Oh, hang! How should I have got to know her? I couldn't have—I mean She'd resent it. Anyhow, I should have got to know her.

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"After all," he went on, his flights of fancy mounting higher, "perhaps She wouldn't mind. On such a night . . . and She wouldn't give a hang for all the Mrs. Grundys. I wonder what She ought to be like? Very tall and slim, perhaps, with only a faint colouring, so that her face is pearly pale in moonlight. Fair hair, and the shadow of it falling like a dim cloud over her brows. A touch of mystery—something of 'La Belle Dame sans Merci'—about the eyes, but without the cruelty. Features——"

He broke off in the midst of painting this mental picture and laughed.

"Reggie, my friend," he said to himself, "this folly must cease. Turn about and set yourself seriously to the task of finding your way back. There was once a poet with a great mind who extracted truth and beauty from all the unlovely words in the language. 'Never the time and the place and the loved one all together,' sang this poet, and it was a true song."

He felt in his pocket for a cigarette and then for matches. There were but few matches left in the box, and he cast about for a sheltered spot before he risked striking one. A little in advance, and on his right hand, was a small barn, the first of a number of scattered farm buildings. Its door lay open and aslant, the bottom hinge having given way. He strode towards it and entered, rattling his matches.

Inside only a faint light had crept through the chinks and through the open door. It was apparently empty, for nothing stirred as he entered, but it smelt faintly and pleasantly of cattle and warm hay.

He struck a match and bent his head, shielding the flame with his fingers. Then he uttered an exclamation, as if he had burnt himself, and the match went out. The faint yellow light had shown him, so close that another stride would have brought him within arm's length of her, a Watteau shepherdess, crook and all, looking for all the world like a life-sized replica of a Dresden china figure in his mother's cabinet.

He struck another match and looked into a pair of eyes that seemed at first a little startled and troubled; but before the flame died he saw that look fade from them, as if they had read something reassuring in his face.

She was neither short nor tall, this shepherdess, and her colouring was warm and dark. Her eyes were large and lustrous and appealing—the sad eyes which Nature gives to so many happy women. His dream-lady of a few minutes since had already gone back into the clouds.

"I beg your pardon," Caverner stammered; "I had no idea. I might have frightened you to death."

She uttered a little laugh that held scarcely a note of embarrassment. His quick ear caught a certain innocent bravado in that laugh.

"I saw you coming," she said, "and thought it would be better not to be seen—like this—so I slipped in here."

"Shepherdess," said he, "be merciful to me, for I am a mortal, and, unless I am mad, I have strayed into Arcady. If there are penalties, I would say that it is no fault of mine, but I cannot plead penitence. Shepherdess, I have prayed for things like this to happen."

"The penalties," said she, "are blood-curdling for saying such foolish things, and the—er—immortals will exact them unless you go at once."

Caverner shook his head very slowly. The ground was tricky, but he was feeling his way.

"In my country," he said, "it would not be forgiven unless I insisted on seeing you to your—your grotto, or wherever it is you live."

She laughed, and this time there was something friendly and appreciative in the sound of it.

"Shepherdesses don't live in grottos," she said. "But tell me, how did you get here?"

Caverner took a pace aside, so that he might see her more clearly in the dim light from the doorway.

"That," said he, "is a long story. By the way, there is a vice amongst mortals associated with a herb called tobacco——"

"Yes, please smoke," said the Shepherdess. "Indeed, if you have a cigarette to spare——"

He offered her his case at once, and struck a match. The light, held close to her face, gave him a clear sight of her features. She was little more than a child, this shepherdess.

"Oh, Phyllis!" he cried. "Oh, Clorinda! Oh, Chloe! What—even in Arcady? It is like the thought of Aphrodite eating Christmas pudding!"

She laughed, and her breath extinguished the match.

"And now," she said, "will you please stop being absurd, and tell me who you are, and—and all about yourself? You see, I can't help being curious; I thought I knew everybody about here."

"Ah, but I am a mortal—a stranger. In my world I am known as Reginald W. S. Caverner. I won't tell you what the initials stand for. Let us pass them over with the remark that they stand for even worse names than Reginald. I was born in London, the son of wealthy but respectable parents. Early in my career my nurse allowed me to fall on my head, but as the effects of the fall were not permanent, it was unnecessary to train me for a political career, as my parents feared would have to be the case. Indeed, so far from being naturally stupid, I turned out to be a brilliant scholar, and became in time head boy of Dr. Barnardo's"



'He struck another match and looked into a pair of eyes that seemed at first a little startled and troubled."

The Shepherdess choked slightly.

"Are you sure," she asked anxiously—"that fall, you know?"

"But," continued Caverner sadly, "when I went up to Borstal I got into the wrong set. I become an athlete rather than a student, and was given my half-Blue for hop-scotch. A pity, isn't it, that Borstal only gives a half-Blue for hop-scotch?"

He paused, and the Shepherdess gurgled and begged him to continue.

"When I came down with only a Second in Brass-finishing, my father, who had no respect for the manly sports in which I had indulged, was bitterly disappointed. He wanted me to go into the City, and have rooms at Surbiton, and wear spats, and go on the river on Sundays with stockjobbers' daughters. A second time I had to break his heart. I went to the States and became a cow-puncher."

"What—really?"

"As ever was. I had been punching cows—a brutalising sport—for three or four years, when verses of singular beauty and originality began to appear in the newspaper published in the nearest township. After a while I was identified as the author; but the lynching party arrived at my house about an hour too late. New York, in the person of a mad editor—and oh, Shepherdess, thank Heaven for an occasional mad editor!—had sent for me, and I was already on the train.

"Impossible as it may seem to an Arcadian, there are a few mortals who actually make a living by writing stories and verses. In due time I became one of them. My father, who believed that such people lived in garrets and subsisted principally on herrings toasted over candles, was amazed to see me turn up again without a single patch on my clothes. He forgave me handsomely, and a dark deed was done to the fatted calf. There has been a smell of roast veal pervading the ancestral home ever since. A few hours ago I was on my way to Falmouth for a well-earned holiday. A goods train had managed to wreck itself on the line in front of the express in which I was travelling. We had to stop for an indefinite time, and, not knowing that I was on the Arcadian frontier, I got out and walked. I should have guessed where I was. Shepherdess, the air was full of witchery."

The Shepherdess nodded the shapeliest of little heads. She knew how to read between the lines when the spaces were wide enough. Caverner regarded her quizzically.

"One good tale," he suggested, "deserves another."

She looked down, smiling, and let a little trickle of smoke escape from her lips.

"Oh, mine is soon told. Near here there lives a certain Lady Fox-Elliott."

"Lady Fox-Elliott? That doesn't sound Arcadian."

"I am afraid she isn't very. But she is literary—she writes pastoral plays in blank verse."

"I know them, I know them," Caverner murmured. "I mean the type, not the plays."

"One of these," the Shepherdess continued, "we have just performed on her lawn, in aid of the new organ and the church warming fund."

"The new organ! The church warming fund!" repeated Caverner in agony. "Oh, Arcady!"

"We dined in our costumes, and afterwards one of the Fox-Elliott boys volunteered to drive me home. There was no chaperon—that's Arcadian, isn't it?—but I've known them all my life."

She paused and shook the ash from the tip of her cigarette, and did her best to look as if that were the end of the story.

"But, Shepherdess," Caverner murmured, "this barn is surely not your home?"

"No-o."

"Where, then, is the Fox-Elliott boy and the—er—the hay-cart, or whatever he was driving?"

"I made him put me down, and insisted on walking home by myself. It isn't far, and I didn't think I should meet anybody. You see, he—tried to be silly."

"He left you because you told him to?"

"I was very angry with him," said the Shepherdess, in a cheerful undertone. "He tried to kiss me."

"The young fool!"

The Shepherdess started quite perceptibly and stared at Caverner for a moment.

"For trying," Caverner explained, "and not succeeding."

"O-oh!" Her lips parted to frame a challenge, but she thought better of it in time. She lowered her eyes before Caverner's, feeling that he had read all that had passed through her mind.

"I didn't say much," said the Shepherdess; "it was the way I looked at him."

"Poor chap!" said Caverner, with feeling. "I say, shall we go outside? It's jollier there in the moonlight than here."

The Shepherdess inclined her head and turned on her little high heels.

"I suppose," she said, with studied indifference, "it's no use my asking such a preposterous person as you to go away?"

"No earthly use. I intend, sooner or later, seeing you safely home."

"I thought as much," said the Shepherdess resignedly.

* * * * *

"You are to talk to me, please, and be interesting, or I shall ask you to take me home at once."

"If I make myself too interesting, Shepherdess, you will try to run home by yourself."

"Are you going to be foolish, like every other man?"

"Dear Heaven, Shepherdess, is this a night for wisdom?"

They were sitting on a green bank, as oddly-assorted a couple in the matter of dress as the moon looked down upon. The Shepherdess bent grave little brows towards her lap, and hid a mouth that trembled on the verge of a smile.

"What am I to talk about? You shall call the tune."

"Anything you choose."

"Then I choose—love."

She forced herself to meet his gaze, and assumed a wondrous air of unsophistication.

"Yes," she said, "talk about love, if you will. Tell me some story out of your own life."

"Shepherdess, if I did, you would insist on going home."

"I thought," she murmured, a catch of disappointment in her voice, "you were the kind of man to understand one's moods."

"Very well. I will match you tale for tale—true stories."

The Shepherdess reflected.

"You don't know what part of the country you are in?" she asked.

"I have called it Arcady, but I could not find it on any map. I could not even tell you the name of the county."

"Will you promise not to ask anyone?"

"Why?"

"And not to look out of the window at the names of the stations?"

"Why?"

"Because I must be quite sure of never seeing you again before I tell my story."

"I will promise all you ask," he answered, with unexpected readiness.

The Shepherdess turned her head away.

"Go on," she murmured a little distantly. "You first."

"My train had broken down," he began, "and I got out and——"

"No, no," she interrupted, "that isn't a love story."

"Is it not, Shepherdess? How shall you answer for another's heart?"

"Oh, please! Tell me something—something that happened a long time ago."

"A long time ago," he repeated, and looked up into the full, clear face of the moon. "Very well, Shepherdess. I had just left school. How old was I? Eighteen—nineteen. And shy! Oh, you could have made game of me then, Shepherdess! I went down to do some reading with a country parson, and he had a daughter. You know the type—her type—rather big, with a fine free stride, somehow not quite ungraceful. Fair hair she had, and a round face with a wonderful colouring, nice hazel eyes. To meet her in my new surroundings was quite enough. I loved her the moment I set eyes on her.

"Of course, everybody soon knew, but I prayed they didn't. I suffered agonies of embarrassment. The mere mention of the word 'love' was painful to me. Every word she said had some deep significance to make me sad or happy. I've seen other boys like it since, and had the grace to pity them. How they must have laughed at me, those people!

"We used to go for walks together. At first I schemed for these, using the most intricate devices. Later I grew bold enough to suggest them. Poor girl, she must have found me poisonously dull—a creature of monosyllables and quick sidelong glances. She used to chatter away merrily and frankly enough. A year older than me, you see, and ten years older in everything but actual years.

"Well, the time came for me to go, and then came our last walk. Heaven only knows how miserable I was, how utterly hopeless. And she seemed so unreasonably, so terribly cheerful. After a while we sat on a bank under a hedge in the sunlight, and I could think of nothing at all to say. And she was silent, too, and that was dreadful. Oh, Shepherdess, how I spurred myself then to tell her that I cared—and failed!

"At last, 'I believe you're glad I'm going,' I said. She laughed at that—quite lightly, I thought—and looked at me. 'You know very well,' she answered, 'that you believe nothing of the sort.' And then a wonderful thing happened. Quite frankly she leaned towards me and rested her hand on my shoulder so that her head almost touched mine. Her hair was faintly scented and very soft. I could feel it brushing my cheek with almost a spirit touch. Then—I

had only to move my head an inch or two — I sighed and rested my cheek against hers.

"She did not seem to mind. She let it rest there, and I felt it burn against mine. I felt that she must hear my heart beating, and all the trouble that lay heavy about it. We remained like that, without speaking, for five or ten minutes. Then somebody came along, and we got up and continued our walk."

"And you did not even kiss her?" said the Shepherdess reproachfully.

"If I had, there would have been something less precious in the memory."

"Or tell her?"

"No, Shepherdess. I had grown a little bolder—ever so little—but after that *she* became shy and speechless. When we said good-bye she hardly looked at me."

The Shepherdess said nothing for a little space. Then—

"Do you believe that—that a kiss spoils everything?"

"Sometimes, Shepherdess, when we are very young. That first kiss is the fulfilment of Love's plan. Our time is not yet. After that Love will not journey with us any further along the road. Better always to keep the perfect memory."

The Shepherdess nodded.

"I have never been shy," she confessed—"at least, never so shy as a nice boy. No girl ever is. You must have been nice in those days. You've changed a lot since."

She gave a sidelong glance to drive the shaft home, but Caverner only laughed.

"I was seventeen when I met him," she went on in a lower key. "He was stopping at the East Coast hotel when mother and I went there. He was shy, too, but I only found it out by accident. He hid it under great mountains and forests of chaff and chatter. I should think he was about twenty-three, and not a bit like my brothers or their friends. He was quite poor, I think—a clerk in some London office. He didn't use that slang which undergrads bring home with them from college; but he was a dear thing, and he hadn't that nerve-racking suspicion of an accent like some of the young men we found there.

"He came up to me on the second day as if he had known me for years. He simply wouldn't go away, and I had to talk to him. I tried to frighten him with mother, and failed miserably. 'That's all right,' said he; 'I'll tell her we've met before.' And he did that very night—invented a long story that I had to stand by and listen to. I simply couldn't call him a liar, so I had to be an accomplice.

"I think he was the happiest thing I ever knew until the time of his stay began to grow short. He had a laugh—Heavens, what a laugh!—that never irritated, but made one want to laugh with him, and he had a stock of queer expressions and catch-phrases which he was always using. Mother at first referred to him as a 'person,' but soon came to like him. None of us could help it.

"When he was with me I could tell that he was desperately afraid of being serious. It was as if he thought that one word uttered without a laugh might reveal some secret. Once or twice I caught a look of trouble in his eyes, but he chased all his shadows and mine away with that wonderful hilarity of his.

"I knew he was fond of me. He used to say so himself, but always in fun, always in such a way as if I were not to believe him. That was his way of guarding himself—the brazen armour over his funny, shy little heart.

"Before he went he took me for a long walk. We went bare-headed in sun and wind over long stretches of sand. For a long time he was jollier than I had ever known him before. I did nothing but laugh, so that he almost made me forget he was going back to London. I felt as if we were both made of the breeze and the sunlight. It wasn't until we were well on the way back that we mentioned his departure, and then it was I who spoke. 'Oh, Dicky,' I said, 'you will write to me, won't you?'

"He flung away from me, acting a caricature of scorn. 'Forward young minx!' he cried. I laughed and touched him on the arm in protest. 'Oh, Dicky!' I said. Quite unexpectedly he caught the hand that touched him, and, turning, seized the other. So we stood, I laughing, in the sun, two arms' length apart.

"I stopped laughing when I saw there was only a faint smile on his lips. He looked at me in a way that hurt me. Oh, Heavens,' he breathed, 'what have I done that this should happen to me?'

"I tried to speak and couldn't. My cheeks must have burnt red as poppies. I felt him draw me towards him, and then suddenly he dropped my hands. 'You're such a kid!' he said bitterly, and then, without another word, walked slowly on.

"'I'm not such a kid, after all,' I said at

last, keeping pace beside him. He did not look at me, but seized my arm and hugged it against his side; and so, with hardly another word, we went on to the town and the ugly red hotel."

There was another pause.

"And that," said Caverner, "was the end."

She nodded.

"You see, he was a clerk in some merchant's office, earning a hundred and fifty a year, one of the people who live in suburbs, and get laughed at for being respectable and bearing the burden of the nation's taxes. He saw that it had to end there, and wouldn't even write. My people would have made a fuss if it had gone on, and—and I *was* really a kid, wasn't I? But I cried myself asleep the night he went. And I've never really quite forgotten him."

Caverner leaned towards her.

"Are you still a child, Shepherdess," he asked, "or have you learned?"

"Learned? Learned what?"

"That these things are part of life, more necessary than any schooling, so that our lives may dovetail neatly with the lives of those around us. Our meeting? We are threads in the great tapestry, one the warp and the other the woof. To-night it was destined that the two threads should meet."

She laughed lightly.

"You make Fate too great a busybody," she answered. "Our meeting is surely not so very important."

"Even if we never meet again we have helped to make some figure in the tapestry. And oh, Shepherdess, can you be sure of anything in this mad, wonderful world? Suppose Love comes in many guises before he reveals himself. Suppose I were your young clerk, and you were my parson's daughter. Suppose——"

"Suppose," said the Shepherdess sedately, "you see me home. Good Heavens, I am afraid to think how late it is!"

"You don't believe," said Caverner, rising, "that through all time we two threads of different colours have been woven nearer and nearer to each other until to-night?"

"I am out of my depth," said the Shepherdess. "You see, I don't write poetry."

* * * * *

They paused to say good-bye by a wrought-iron gate. Beyond, standing a little back from the road, was the dim impression of a squat Georgian house. Caverner held her hand, which after a moment she made no effort to release.

"I shall never see you again," she said.

"Your conditions seem to have made it very unlikely," said Caverner.

"You'll go away directly we've said good-night?"

"Yes."

"Then good-night, and thank you for a happy hour."

As he bent his head, she took a step towards him, stood on tiptoe, tilting up her face, kissed him gravely and frankly, like a child, and, turning, ran to the gate.

Inside the gate she stopped and turned again.

"You *are* going to keep your word?" she asked tremulously.

"Certainly I am. I promised you I would go away in complete ignorance of where I met you, and make no inquiries."

"And you really will?" said the Shepherdess rather piteously.

"Yes, of course I will. A promise is a promise."

"Oh, I'm so relieved," she murmured, still rather piteously.

"But," said Caverner cheerfully, "the newspaper to-morrow will report the railway accident, so I shall be able to find my way back without the least difficulty. I shall be back here in a couple of days."

"Oh, you won't!" cried the Shepherdess joyfully.

"I didn't promise not to, did I?"

"No, but"— there was a ring of ecstasy in the small, clear voice—"oh, how hateful of you!"

THE CHILDREN'S AID COMMITTEE

AND ITS WORK FOR THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN OF SOLDIERS AND SAILORS ON SERVICE

Photographs by Clarke & Hyde

ONE of the most beneficent and least obtrusive of War organisations has its headquarters at 35, Hertford Street, Mayfair, where an admirable work is carried on for the welfare of the soldier's and the sailor's child. The Sailors' and Soldiers' Children's Aid Committee has grown out of small beginnings into an institution that extends its activities into every corner of the kingdom, and to-day, with its huge family and its elaborate machinery, it has attained proportions not hoped for by Miss Margaret Douglas and her friends when they set the scheme afoot four years ago. The Committee, one of the registered War charities, has for its object the providing of hospitality for the children of soldiers, sailors, and others in difficulty or distress due to the War. It exists to help children whose fathers are on active service, and who, by death or disability, are deprived of a mother's care. In a word, it mothers the motherless in cases where utter neglect must have been the children's lot. To the man on active service there is no sorer trial than the knowledge that he has no one with whom to leave his young family. He may be a widower, he may be separated from his wife; in either case he has a friend in the Committee, which assumes full charge and responsibility down to the minutest particulars, and provides for all the children's wants—a home, food, clothing, and the most careful oversight.



MRS. STAFFORD NORTHCOTE AND SOME OF THE CHILDREN WAITING TO GO AWAY INTO THE COUNTRY.

The work began in the first month of the War. At that time it was hoped that the scheme of private hospitality then contemplated might prove useful to some forty, fifty, or probably a hundred children whose parents were in distress or difficulty, at the

expenditure of a few hundred pounds a year. But the movement grew like the proverbial snowball. At the end of 1916 no fewer than 1956 children had passed through the Committee's hands, and in the two years and five months ending December, 1916, a total sum of £15,281 had been administered. Still the work increased, and by December, 1917, the number of children cared for had risen to 2524, and the sum administered stood at £18,295. The current year will show a still larger result.



MISS MARGARET DOUGLAS (ON THE LEFT) AND THE HONORARY TREASURER, MISS MAXWELL-LYTE, WHO HAS NOW HANDLED OVER TWENTY THOUSAND POUNDS.

It is all done very quietly, without expenditure on public appeals, for the work carries its own commendation. But it calls for ceaseless labour on the part of the promoters, who are nearly all voluntary workers. Before long the Committee found itself hampered for space, but carried on gallantly in very cramped office accommodation, until, in the present year, Colonel Abel Smith lent, rent free, the convenient house in Hertford Street, which is now the headquarters of a continually extending effort. Considering the range of the work done, and the minute detail involved, the staff is extraordinarily small; but an admirable system keeps the machine moving smoothly. In these days of colossal staffs, this organisation is a model of efficient economy. To sketch its working is the purpose of the present article.

To begin at the beginning, the Committee's first point of contact with the children it befriends is obviously the application for help. These applications are dealt with in the first room on the ground floor. There are kept the files containing every child's family papers, in respect of general particulars—circumstances, the reason why the child is motherless, whether by death or separation. In these files are also recorded the father's regiment or ship, and a note of the communications made to him; for he receives a letter at frequent intervals, telling him how his bairns fare. With this go his letters to the Committee—very touching and human documents, many of them, and full of gratitude for a great care lifted.

Equally interesting is another item in the file—the State papers referring to the child's

Government allowance in respect of his or her father's Service pay and the Motherless Children's Government allowance. Here Miss Margaret Douglas appears as legally authorised guardian. On every schedule her name is entered as "dependent upon" Private X, Sergeant Y, Leading Seaman Z, and so forth. Possibly—almost certainly—no other woman in the kingdom administers so many payments for the dependents of fighting men. This part of Miss Douglas's work alone is no light matter. It entails the signature week by week of several hundred receipts, and again this procedure has its counterpart in the paying out, where the Treasurer's department has to sign orders innumerable for the children's weekly board and lodging.

The financing of this big family is an equally onerous affair, involving much careful accounting; but here, again, a simple and efficient system accomplishes the work without fuss or extensive staff. In the room adjoining the reception department Miss Maxwell-Lyte, the Hon. Treasurer, sits with her colleagues and controls the whole of the Committee's money matters. Here again the visitor is shown interesting files, headed "The Bates Family," "The Green Family," and suchlike—a pleasant, familiar, non-official touch this, which runs through all the Children's Aid organisation. Miss Douglas has always sought to avoid the harsh impersonality of red-tape and official forms in her transactions and correspondence with her charges and their parents. In this she has succeeded to admiration, and has made parents feel that the Committee has indeed taken the place of that mother of whose help and care the children stood in need. The "office" is carefully suppressed, or, rather, it is merged in the friend. One has only to see specimens of the records, selected at random, to know what a human and kindly hand this Committee reaches out to those it benefits.



MISS DOUGLAS AND ONE OF THE COUNTRY MOTHERS WITH THREE OF HER CHARGES.

To return, however, to the family accounts. The state of these from day to day is visible at a glance, for, as each file opens, it shows the receipt and expenditure to date. Receipts from the War pensions and other

sources are never quite adequate to meet the wants of any individual case, and the maintenance of the children has to be supplemented by the moneys arising from voluntary subscriptions. The administration of funds is most minute, careful, and economical. Few charities have made money go so far, and in this connection it may be mentioned



MISS IVY BUCKLER, MISS DOUGLAS, AND MISS POLITZER, AT WORK ON CORRESPONDENCE

that the hon. auditor, in his report, congratulated the Committee on having handled £18,267 at a cost of slightly over one per cent. in clerical labour. This he considered "a unique record," in view of the fact that every £100 meant dealing with so many small sums.

What, then, is this system of "hospitality" for the children of fighting men? It is many-sided. It is a scheme of welfare in the widest sense. It supplies guardianship and motherly care, house-room, board and lodging; it steps in where homes have been broken up by the War, and, following the Scriptural ideal, "places the solitary in families." Further, it is a vast fresh air scheme, for it plants its children in the country, with particular benefit to those who come from crowded city neighbourhoods.

This implies a system of boarding-out with cottagers throughout the United Kingdom. The organisation, now very extensive, seems to have grown up of itself. The good people in country districts come forward with generous readiness. One case of hospitality led to another, and so the good work goes on. In every district some

voluntary lady worker takes oversight of the children boarded there, and corresponds with headquarters; but the cottage hostesses themselves hold direct communication with the Committee on all points relating to their charges, such as health, clothing, and conduct. In the hospitality department every child's whereabouts and the particulars of his temporary home are recorded in a card index and checked by a system of double entry.

Some of the communications are very human. A complaint about an unruly boy, for example, is dealt with personally, even amid all the other work of the Committee. The youth is written to in the kindest possible manner, and the usual result is a great improvement. Not the least part of Miss Douglas's work is the influence for good which she exerts on her charges, without any deliberately moral effort, but merely by kind, just, and friendly treatment.

In more material directions also the individual is cared for. This is evident in the clothing department, where the letters are no cold official "indents," but real reflections of personality. A country hostess, for example, writes to say that a new suit is urgently required for Johnny X, and adds that that young man would like a sailor suit, with a whistle and a cord. The letter is considered on the second floor in Hertford Street, in the room adjoining that where details of hospitality are arranged. Here in the clothing-room is an array of presses and chests of drawers, filled with every kind of little garment. All cases are marked according to size, and, as to style, issues are made in as near agreement with request as possible, even to Johnny X's cord and whistle. Clothes are contributed by working parties and many other friends of the Committee. The supply can never be too great for the demand. In the same room, equally carefully sorted for distribution, are the boots, which require constant renewal. The work of the clothing department is unending. Obviously it entails heavy labour in packing and parcel dispatch.

There is, however, another and more important question of transport to be considered—that of the children themselves. When a case has been undertaken, the children are brought to Hertford Street in the morning. They are taken to the third floor, where they are given a bath, if necessary, and, after various other hygienic precautions, they play in a pleasant nursery, under a nurse's care, until the time of departure comes. Voluntary helpers act as escort, and see the children to their destination. A scheme of temporary hospitality in town is another interesting feature. It provides a night's care for children who cannot conveniently be sent to the country on the day of their reception. One voluntary worker has already entertained over three hundred children in this way. The travelling question does not always end with the journey to the country and back. It may be that a child has to be brought up to town for a day to see the Committee's honorary oculist or honorary doctor. Escort and temporary hospitality are again required, all matters calling for special arrangement and most minute attention to detail. But the kind hearts and eyes at Hertford Street are equal to their complicated problem of vicarious motherhood.

Innumerable letters of thanks have come from parents to the Committee—thanks for good and regular news of the children; thanks from men on leave who have been to visit their families; thanks from mothers in hospital, who have had their little ones provided for when they themselves have been ill. Friendly relations with parents are often maintained after the children have passed out of the Committee's hands. If they choose to write, touch is kept with them, sometimes with remarkable results. A mother, whose neglect of her family had brought her into the police court, was deprived of guardianship, and the Committee was appointed guardian until the children should reach the age of sixteen years. Bad as her conduct had been, the woman was not wholly without a mother's instinct. She used to write to ask about the children, and she was always answered in as friendly a way as if she were the most exemplary parent. This correspondence restored her self-respect. Her husband came home and was discharged. When the children returned to him, the mother wrote to Miss Douglas, saying that, when so much had been done for her children, she would like to try to be a really good mother to them. She pulled up accordingly, and finally gave such proofs of restored fitness that her husband took her back, and the family is now reunited and happier than it had ever been before.

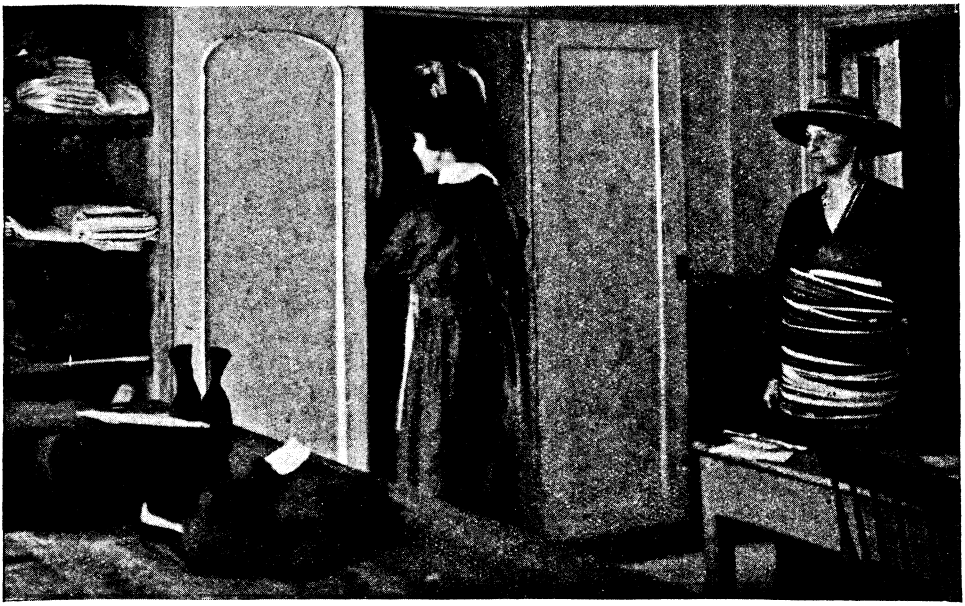
This is only one of the many romances in the Committee's records. There is the pleasing story of the company quartermaster sergeant, a widower, who, on his return, came to Hertford Street and said

diffidently that he was thinking of giving the children a new mother. He was told, if he had found a suitable person, he could not do better. He married at once and received his children back, some before the wedding, some a day or two later. He was a man who had sacrificed a good position to enlist as a volunteer, and he was sensitive about his children's welfare and surroundings. The Committee, equally sensitive, made special arragements, boarding the children in a home of a better class, and actually putting one of the boys to a choir school on the South Coast. It is the little considerations of this kind that give extra value to the work. It is a striking disproof of the idea that a charitable system must be coldly impersonal.

For the entire organisation Miss Margaret Douglas is responsible. She has twenty-five regular helpers, nearly all voluntary, and to their constancy and enthusiasm she pays the highest tribute. Many have been with her since the early days of the War. The Earl of Lytton takes the warmest interest in every detail of the work, and his advice is constantly at the Committee's service.

The Children's Aid Committee is now fully recognised by the War Pensions Committee, which keeps in close touch and sends on cases. The work cannot be too widely known. Already it has made its way, and has amply justified its existence. It is looked upon as equal to any task. As the present writer was taking leave of Miss Douglas at headquarters, the telephone bell rang. Someone had rung up to ask if the Committee could take—immediately—five motherless children, one of them a babe of two months old!

A large order, but not beyond the powers of Hertford Street. The Secretary at once accepted this big addition to her already huge family. The organisation is equal to any demand, and she knows that public support will not fail her. She has never asked for it directly, but her work has forwarded itself by its own excellence. It is a work that will have abiding results for the new generation.



MRS. BLANE AND MISS VIOLET FAIRCLOUGH AT WORK IN THE CLOTHES STORES.

RESPONSIBILITY

By LIEUTENANT RONALD GURNER

Illustrated by Frank Gillett

UNTIL the beginning of April, 1915, the War had gone well with Gus Parkin. There had certainly been various untoward incidents, such as the occasion upon which he lost his way while on a carrying party, and, after two hours' wandering among deserted trenches, found himself in close proximity to the German wire. But minor events such as these had not been sufficient to cast a sombre hue over the War as a whole. The initial strangeness of trench life had worn off. His capture of Von Armenfeld had added considerably to his standing in the battalion. The occasional shelling to which he had been subjected had done little more than add local colour to the scheme; in fact, as a whole, Gus Parkin was enjoying the War.

"'Tain't bad out 'ere, take it all round," he said to Fred Brindley, one evening in the "Trois Amis," in Armentières.

"Yus, but ye're ain't seen much yet."

"I seen the trenches, and I seen the shells, and I've seen the 'Un. 'Ow much more do you want me to see?" replied Gus Parkin, with some spirit.

"You wait—you'll know soon enough." And Fred Brindley lit his pipe.

"Why, what's it like? What do you want me to see?"

"Times when they shells yer and keeps on shellin' yer, and then pretends to attack, and then shells yer again—that's the time."

"What's it like?"

"'Tain't 'oney." And Fred Brindley changed the conversation.

But these words of his stuck in Gus Parkin's mind. What, he wondered, would it be like when the real test came? For he acknowledged to himself that the test had not come yet. He had heard of men whose nerves had given under the strain, of other men to whom danger seemed to mean nothing at all. To which class would he belong? Almost he found himself looking forward to the sterner test when the question would be solved. As yet he had received his baptism of fire only in part. The question was to be answered sooner than he foresaw.

The first three days of the battalion's next tour in the Armentières sector were among the most peaceable that officers or men had experienced. The conventional shells once fired, there was little or nothing to break the peace of trench warfare in a quiet part of the line. Gus Parkin's volatile temperament had risen in accord with the pleasantness of the surroundings, and it was in a cheery humour that he filled and placed sand-bags beside his friend Joe Kenton in the early morning of the fourth day.

"Like being at 'ome, ain't it?" he remarked, as he stretched himself for a moment.

"Yus, in some ways." Joe Kenton happened to be engaged to be married.

"Wonder if they're up to anything? They say as 'ow a sector can be too quiet sometimes."

"Why worry? 'Tain't no use looking for trouble till it comes."

And it was just at that moment that it came. The fourfold flash of light on the horizon made Gus Parkin and Joe Kenton look up. Again four stabs and shafts of light, in which the stripped trees stood out gaunt against the lurid background.

"They was nearer than the first lot," said Gus Parkin, as the shells exploded in No Man's Land a little to their right.

"Starting from over there now, too," remarked Joe Kenton, as he looked to the left. Then, "They're on us!" as the whine of the shells increased to a roar, and four explosions were heard immediately behind them.

"'Ear that?" said Gus Parkin. "Get into the trench! Come along!" Together with the rest of the working party they dropped down into the trench and flattened themselves against the parapet.

"All right, Joe?" asked Gus, after a moment.

"Yus." But Joe Kenton's voice seemed strange.

Gus Parkin noticed that the hand with which he folded his greatcoat around his neck was shaking.

"That was near!"—as the trench shook and the air filled with smoke.

"Brought up some ammunition with his ration to-night, 'as Fritz," said Gus Parkin in a cheery voice. Things were becoming interesting.

"Wonder 'ow they're getting along on the left?" he remarked after a moment, as Joe Kenton made no reply.

"Thought some'ow this'd 'appen." Still no reply.

"'Ere, Joe, old sport, buck up! The first seven years is always the worst."

It was obvious that it was up to him to cope with the situation. A drawn face turned to him in the moonlight.

"Won't it never stop?"

"Yus, it'll stop—it's a-stoppin' now." And there was silence for a few moments, while both men waited to see if his words were true.

Then came the welcome sound of Lieutenant Twining's voice as he came along the trench.

"All right here?"

"Yus, sir, we're all right," said Gus Parkin. "Goin' strong."

"Who's here with you?"

"Joe Kenton, sir. 'E's all right—ain't yer, Joe?"

"Yus."

But Joe Kenton turned anxiously to Gus Parkin as soon as the officer had passed on.

"'Ere, Gus, you won't tell, will yer?"

"Tell what?"

But Gus Parkin knew to what his friend was referring.

"Tell 'im about me."

"There ain't nothing to tell." And Gus Parkin knew that he would be forgiven the lie. He had come through the test himself, he knew, and this knowledge made him feel even more sympathetic towards his friend.

"Thankee, Gus."

"Hullo, there's stand-to!"

Silently Gus Parkin watched Joe Kenton don his equipment, take his rifle, and move into place in the traverse. Then, as the day broke, he looked at the shell-torn trenches and the pitted fields, and the quiet town behind them, and realised, as he looked, that he saw these things with a different and a deeper vision. War had unmasked for a moment something of the fulness of its terror.

* * * * *

Little was said about the bombardment by the veterans of the battalion after their return to billets. They had experienced such shelling before, and Armentières was more than enough recompense. Among more recently-joined arrivals it was a fruitful subject of conversation, but a conversation in which, for different reasons, Gus Parkin and his friend took no part. Only once the matter was referred to between them.

"You know, Gus," said Joe Kenton nervously one evening, as they sat together in the "Trois Amis," "it won't 'appen again."

"You're all right, Joe—don't you worry." From the bottom of his heart Gus Parkin wished that Joe Kenton would not refer to what he, too, wanted to forget.

"It took me sudden like. I 'ain't 'ad it before; but I knows what it's like now, and that's something, ain't it?" he said half appealingly.

"Yus, course it is. But you're all right."

Colourless language, perhaps, for the comforter, but it was all that Parkin could think of.

"Hullo, Tom!" he said in a changed voice, as Tom Martin entered the room at that moment. His appearance was a welcome relief.

"'Ullo, old sport! 'Ow's yerself? Café au lay," he continued, turning to Mamzelle. "'Eard the news?"

"What news?"

"We're a-shiftin', we are. Jones told me—'e's the Sergeant-Major's servant, you know."

Further comment on the authenticity of the information was unnecessary.

"Shiftin', are we?" said Gus. "Where to?"

"Nerve Chapel, 'e said; marchin' there, 'e thinks. Division's going there for a rest. Time it 'ad it, too."

"Nerve Chapel, eh? Where's that?"

"Down south. Nice quiet place, they say; nothing ever 'appens there."

"That's the place for us, ain't it, Joe?" said Gus Parkin.

"Yus; makes yer feel at 'ome like."

"Startin' next Toosday, Jones said. It'll be a bit of sport. Well, I must off to find old Bill 'Uggins. Going to the pictures. Bong soir, Mamzelle, so long!" And the light-hearted Martin disappeared.

"Ever 'ear what 'e did at Wypers?" asked

Joe Kenton, as he watched the retreating figure.

"No; what?"

"Ran a machine-gun for an hour after the rest of them was knocked out; kept the trench."

"Did 'e? Bit of all right, that. 'Ow did 'e enjoy it?"

"Said 'e didn't notice it, not till afterwards—the shellin', I mean. Sounds funny, that."

"Yus, can't 'ardly believe that. Sounds as if 'e was swinging it a bit. They say the shellin' there was pretty 'ot. I must ask 'im. Well, let's come along and see them pictures."

* * * * *

Lieutenant Twining paused as he heard an audible chuckle from the trench along the parapet of which he was walking. It seemed a strange thing to hear.

"Who's that?" he said.

"Me, sir"—in the well-known voice of Gus Parkin.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing, sir; but I was just thinking it's a funny sort of a rest."

"It is indeed." And Lieutenant Twining reflected a moment on the wild events of the last forty-eight hours. The preliminary bombardment, such as had never before assisted British troops in the history of the world; the scramble from the trenches at dawn, the steady advance up the hill, when casualties had seemed of little account in the moment of victory, the taking of the German trenches on the ridge, the way in which the German officer had squealed when he was bayoneted, the hasty consolidation, the counter-attack that morning, beaten off when it had seemed that it must succeed, and now the command of a company and the responsibility for keeping his line safe throughout the night, thrust suddenly upon him.

"Well, we're going strong, aren't we?" he said.

"Yus, sir, we're all right now. Good fellow, 'e is," said Gus Parkin, as Lieutenant Twining passed on.

There was too much to do for this officer to reflect to a great extent either upon past events or upon his own merit.

"We must get that sap-head manned, sergeant," he said, turning to Sergeant Tomkin. "They may attack again to-night, although I hope they won't. Have you got the wire laid on?"

"Yes, sir, and a bit of trip-wire in front. They're working on it now."

"Good! Get the detail told off, and have the sentry out in an hour's time. You can take off the sentry by Broken Tree when the sap-head is manned. Who'll be there?"

"Privates Miller, Finn, Hislop, and Kenton, under Corporal Robertson," answered Sergeant Tomkin.

"'Ear the noos?" said Joe Kenton to Gus Parkin, a little later. "I'm warned for sap-head duty."

"Are yer?" And Gus Parkin looked at the speaker with interest. A thought that he could not put into words occurred to him.

He scanned his friend's face narrowly under pretence of lighting his pipe. There was no trace of anxiety there. He remembered what Joe Kenton had said: it would probably be all right, after all.

"Well, I think I'll get a bit of sleep first," said Joe Kenton in a few moments. "Got the fire in me bedroom?"

"Yus. Mind yer air yer pyjamas. 'Ope yer'll 'ave a quiet time. When are yer going on?"

"Eleven o'clock." And Joe Kenton composed himself to slumber.

Early the next morning Gus Parkin's hopes bid fair to be realised. The incessant flares showed the anxiety of the Germans, but there had been little shelling and no attack. Peaceably enough Gus Parkin drove in stakes and wrapped wire around them. Then suddenly it came.

It was easy to realise from the first that this was shelling of a different order—no chance "crumps," but heavy and concentrated bombardment. From three sides the shells came, while in front of them the horizon was lit with the lurid glow from the incessant cracklings of the guns. The air was full of the roar of explosions, and, as Gus Parkin pressed closely against the newly-dug trench, he realised that this bombardment was one which it would require his full strength of will to face.

And Joe? When connected thought came to him again, this was the first idea that occurred to his mind. He looked over the trench through the sea of smoke. Somewhere out there was Joe.

His experiences in No Man's Land had given Gus Parkin no small degree of confidence in his prowess in those regions. Initiative was always a marked trait in his character, and few moments elapsed before he stealthily crept out of the trench and across the shaking ground to where Joe

Kenton was posted. Was he alive or dead? And if alive——

He was alive when Gus Parkin reached him, so much so that the beginning of his adventure was very nearly its end.

"Don't shoot, yer——fool!" he muttered hoarsely. "It's me."

"What yer want?" said Joe Kenton, without turning his head.

"Just come to see if you're all right." Parkin slid into the sap-head beside him.

"That was close!" as he felt the wind from a piece of flying metal on his cheek.

No reply.

And then, partly, perhaps, through the strangeness of his surroundings, partly owing to the silence of his friend, Gus Parkin realised that the Terror was upon him. Strive as he would, it seemed something that he could not resist; hammers began to knock in his head, and lights to dance



"'Didn't notice it, some'ow.'"

Joe Kenton appeared to pay no further attention to him.

"Bit warm, ain't it? They're pretty close," said Parkin.

No reply. Kenton's bayonet shone red in the sudden light of an exploding shell. Smoke rolled between him and his friend. A torn strand of wire curved inside the sap-head, a bursting shell he noticed had blocked the way between the sap-head and the trench.

before his eyes. This was not life, this was some strange existence in a universe of dread. He noticed that Joe Kenton seemed still unmoved.

"It's hell, Joe, ain't it?"

Still no reply; and so strained were Gus Parkin's feelings that when, a few moments later, Joe Kenton suddenly fell back with his hand pressed to his throat, Parkin did not immediately realise what had happened.

"'Ere, mate, buck up!" he said. But he

saw the wound, and he realised the emptiness of his words.

"That's done it. Bit of 'ard luck, that. Chance shell—got me."

Gus bent down to catch his words.

"You got ter—keep on watchin'. They're dependin' on us—in the trench—in case—they attack. 'Ere's the wire—mind yer—watch 'ard——"

This was not the conventional farewell of a dying friend, but Gus Parkin understood well enough. He was alone now, he knew, and much depended on him. He laid the dead body gently in the trench, rose, took his rifle in his hand, and stood where Joe Kenton had stood a few moments ago, gazing steadily through the smoke.

* * * * *

"Lucky you was there, I must say," said Sergeant Tomkin. "All the others was knocked out, but it beats me 'ow you came to be there at all."

"I sort o' went out to see if old Joe was all right. 'E's there now, is Joe."

"Yus. 'E were a good fellow. But I dunno 'ow you managed to give the warning."

"Why?"

"Why, that last bit of shelling—you couldn't watch in that."

"What shellin'?"

"You know—them 'eavies. They was all round yer. You can see the 'oles from 'ere."

Gus Parkin followed the sergeant's gaze.

"Didn't notice it, some'ow."

"Asleep, I suppose?" But there was admiration in the sergeant's eyes as he looked at him.

"No. But it keeps yer mind occupied like—watchin'."

And then suddenly, as he spoke, the truth flashed upon him. Tom Martin at Ypres, Joe Kenton, and himself, three very ordinary human beings, and to each, at a crisis, something had happened that had taken them out of themselves, that had enabled them not to fail when failure might indeed have been excusable. No strength of theirs could account for this, he thought; it was something that he could hardly explain; and as he thought, forgotten words spoken in some lecture at Aldershot flashed back into his mind.

"We've all got our duty in the Army, my men, and thank God for it. It's something bigger than us, something that takes us away from our petty selves."

What nonsense it had seemed, but nonsense spoken as the result of the discoveries of human minds that had thought very seriously and deeply about war for many hundreds of years.

"Perhaps 'e knew," said Gus Parkin to himself. "'E'd been in South Africa, 'ad the Colonel. Perhaps 'e'd 'ad it, and 'e knew."

BRACKEN.

THE land's all ruffled with this bracken fern.
How full it is! Here let us lie and sleep,
Or dream, and study how the leaf-tops turn,
Tender and pale, like foam upon the deep
Sea-surges troubled by the restless air
At sundown, when the night with parted lips
Kisses day's sleepy eyes, and draws the fair
Gold head into her bosom. Hist! there slips
A red deer to her breast in this green sea,
And nothing marks her passage, save the flight
Of startled gnats, or a belated bee
Swerving to pass her. Now the scents of night
Rise like the soul of love; the breezes die;
White mists creep out. Hark! How the herons cry!

RICHARD CHURCH.



THE LONG ARM OF COINCIDENCE.

OFFICER (to recruit who has been reported for insolence to sergeant): Remember, you are a soldier now, and you must learn to obey orders. This is a famous regiment—a famous regiment, my man. We tame lions in this regiment. Er—what were you in civil life?

RECRUIT: Lion-tamer, sir.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

NEVER AGAIN!

By Felix J. Summerhayes.

POPPLETON and I *used* to be friends. When I say "friends," I mean that we travelled up to the City together every morning, and often met again on the homeward journey in the evening. In the course of time our acquaintance ripened from the mere passing of "Good day," and opening the windows to suit the other's inconvenience, to the exchange of newspapers and the direction—between us—of the policies of the nation.

But our great bond was a sense of humour. We jointly subscribed to all the leading humorous papers, and eagerly looked forward to them week by week. As time passed, we became expert, and freely criticised sketches and articles, which often led to wordy discussions as to their merits and demerits.

One fatal morning I bought the current *Peepshow*, and, after looking it through, passed it over to Poppleton, who asked: "What's it like this week?"

"Jolly good, as usual," I replied, "except for one article which doesn't seem up to the general standard. You might let me have your opinion on it."

I pointed out the article in question, and he read it carefully.

"What's wrong with it?"

"What's wrong with it? My dear Poppleton, surely you don't think it's good enough for *The Peepshow?*"

"I don't know. Why not?"

I told him. It took a little time to play myself in, but, once set, I knocked the stuff all over the field. I explained fully that there was no vestige of humour in the article, whether you read it from beginning to end, backwards, or upside down.

I commented on the style and compared it with a Civil Servant's attempt at writing Kipling in official phraseology, with the exception that that might be funny. I criticised it as a whole and paragraph by paragraph, and finally wound up by suggesting that *The Peepshow* must have had a spare column and no other MS. of the right length.

I had to stop at last because I thought Poppleton would have a fit. After spluttering till he was purple in the face, and there was quite a mist on the carriage windows, he unburdened his heart and told me—lots of things. The chief were that I had no sense of



DISILLUSION.

TOMMY: 'Ere, this blinkin' cardigan's full o' moths!
SERGEANT: Moths! Well, what did you expect ter find in it—a collection o' rare butterflies?

humour, that "penny dreadfuls" were suitable reading matter for one of my poor intellect, and that—a final explosion—if I thought I could write something better, I ought jolly well to try—or words to that effect.

After the "All clear" I said: "Steady! Anyone would think you wrote the bally thing yourself!"

"I did. Your puny intelligence apparently is unable to recognise humour——"

Just then, fortunately, the train stopped at a station, and I beat a hasty retreat.

And that is why I said that Poppleton and I *used* to be friends.

THE family were entertaining callers one afternoon, and while the grown-ups were talking, the baby crept on the floor. Suddenly there was a loud bump and wild wail. It came from the direction of the piano.

"Oh, the baby has hurt himself!" cried the mother. "Run quick, dear!"

The young father had already dashed toward the piano. He dropped on his knees and groped under the piano for his injured offspring. Presently he returned.

"He fell down and bumped his head on one of the pedals," he reported.

"Oh, the poor darling! Is it a bad bump?" asked one of the guests.

"No," he answered. "Fortunately, his head hit the soft pedal!"

A PERSEVERING LOVER.

"Policewomen are now quite a usual sight in the London streets."—*Daily Paper.*

Roberta, for a year, no less,
I wooed you, but with small success;
Yet still I hope: another course
Is open since you joined the Force.

I'll hie me daily down the street
Where you pursue your morning beat,
And, gazing at some distant cloud,
Will rapidly collect a crowd.

Then when you say, "Move on! Desist!"
Assuredly I shall resist,
For if your smiles I cannot win,
I'll do my best to get run in!

Leslie M. Oyler.

THE bashful bachelor on the fifth floor recently encountered a neighbour—a young mother — and, wishing to be neighbourly, asked—

"How is your little girl, Mrs. Jones?"

"My little *boy* is quite well, I thank you, Mr. Smith," replied the proud mother.

"Oh, it's a boy!" exclaimed the bachelor, in confusion. "I knew it was one or the other."

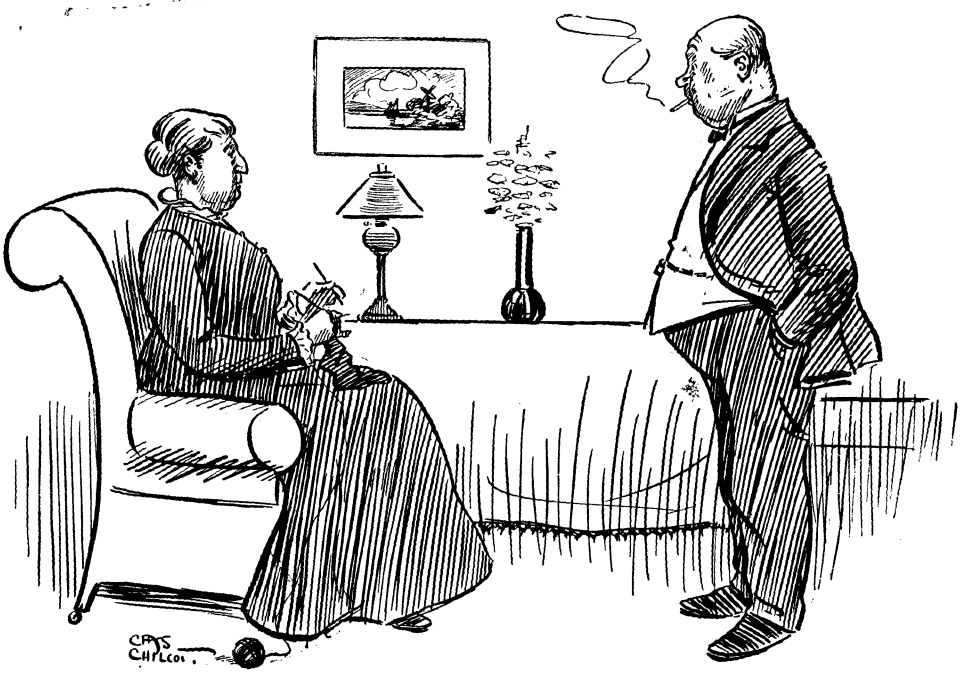


TOPOGRAPHICAL EXACTITUDE.

"AND where were you torpedoed?"

"Well, we was struck right under the bridge, miss."

"Dear, dear! How dreadful! Now, tell me, was that London Bridge or the Tower?"



THE ALTERNATIVE.

"JANE tried to light the fire with paraffin this morning."
"Phew! How much do we owe her?"
"Four and a half months' wages."
"Umph! Better let her go on with the paraffin, then."



EXEMPTED HITHERTO.

OFFICER (inspecting billet): You have a bath, of course?
LANDLADY: Oh, yes, sir; but, thank goodness, we've never 'ad to use it yet!

JIMMY wanted his tooth after it had been pulled, so the dentist wrapped it up in paper and gave it to him.

"But what are you going to do with it, Jimmy?" he asked.

"I'm going to take it home, cram it full of sugar, and watch it ache."

AN extremely wealthy man has occasion frequently to make use of taxis, and he always gives the chauffeurs the legal fare and no more.

Once, when he handed the man the fare, the latter looked it over and said—

"Excuse me, sir, but your son always gives me twice as much as this."

"I don't doubt it," growled the old man; "he has a rich father."

COUNSEL: Come, sir, do you mean to tell me you didn't see the complainant's cow on the land? How near must you be to a beast to recognise it?

WITNESS: About the distance I am from you.

THE other day, since so many young people were called for to help on farms, one boy, who was willing and eager to help, but wholly unacquainted with farm work, was assigned to a farmer who was extremely careless in giving directions as to the work to be done. One day he told the boy to "grease the wagon." An hour later the boy came in and said—

"I've greased every part of the wagon except the sticks that the wheels turn on. I didn't bother with them; they don't show much."



WHAT NEXT?

"I DON'T know what on earth we are going to do about poor Fido."
"What's the matter with him?"
"Matter with him! Why, haven't you noticed how irritated he becomes whenever the baby cries?"

THE first rustic was ruddy of countenance, with a huge beard of the hue politely known as auburn.

The second was smooth-shaven. "I used to have a beard like that till I saw meself in the glass. Then I cut it off."

But the bearded man was not dismayed.

"Much better 'ave left it on, mate," he returned gently. "I used to have a face like yours till I saw it in the glass. Then I growed this beard."

EIGHTEEN.

She is very young and stately,
She has quite grown up but lately,
And she walks along sedately,
With the haughtiest of airs;
But in spite of homage paid her,
And the long gowns they have made her,
To-day, when I waylaid her,
She was sliding down the stairs!

Dorothy Dickinson.

THE SEPTEMBER WINDSOR

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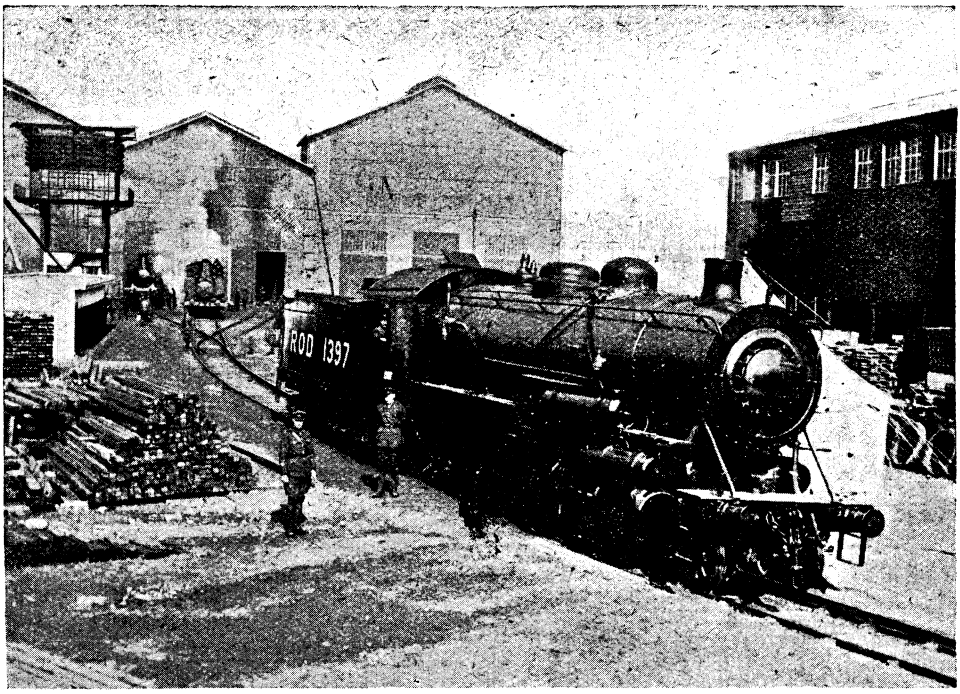
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THE ORCHARD HARVEST.

BY LUCIEN DAVIS.



BRITISH RAILWAY WORK IN FRANCE: AN AMERICAN GIANT ENGINE TURNED OUT IN THESE SHOPS.
From an official photograph.

RAILWAYS AND THE WAR

By MAJOR C. J. C. STREET

THE importance of railways in modern war can hardly be over-estimated. A well-known military critic has recently laid stress upon the strategic results that may follow the loss of parts of the railway system of a theatre of war. "The interruption of traffic on important lines as a result of attack, and the disturbance of traffic in the adjoining country by bombing squadrons, are of the greatest strategic importance. The loss of lines and junctions means far more than the loss of land. It means embarrassment in the provision of the fronts, and delay in bringing troops from one sector to the other. In the defence of modern fronts the most important thing is to be able to move large bodies of troops rapidly to and fro. Railways are the arteries of the modern strategic body. The living blood that rushes through them enables wounded parts of the front to be restored by counter-offensives. The layman cannot even form an approximate idea of the difficulties caused by the loss of such arteries, or what strategic possibilities are lost with a lost railway. The gain in railways is, therefore, to be regarded as strategically one of the most far-reaching results of an offensive."

In examining the part played by railways in war, the subject may be divided into two heads—their strategic functions and their tactical functions. The former may be defined as including movement of troops, both the supply of reinforcements to the fighting zone, and the concentration of reinforcements at any threatened point, and

also the supply of rations, ammunition, and stores of all kinds from the bases to the various rail-heads. The latter may be defined as the distribution of men, rations, ammunition, stores, and guns within the battle zone itself, from rail-head to dump. Consequently, it may be said that the strategic functions are performed mainly by the permanent railway systems of the belligerent nations, the tactical functions mainly by military lines built by the armies in the battle zone to meet the requirements of the situation.

The present article deals solely with the strategic functions of the railways, and is an attempt to show the relation between the permanent railway systems of the belligerent nations and the progress of the War. Considerations of space impose a further limitation. The great part played by the railway systems of England and America must be ignored, and the existing systems of the Continent of Europe alone considered.

It must be remembered that there have been only two previous great wars in which railways have played an adequate part—the American Civil War and the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71. All other wars have taken place before the application of the steam-engine to the problems of transport, or in theatres where no adequate railway network existed. In the first of these wars no mass of troops comparable to that of a modern army was ever moved as a whole, and in the second, although the railways played a decisive part in certain operations, such as the siege of Paris, they had not then reached their present stage of development. It has been said that without railways the siege of Paris would have been impossible, and Hamley, in his "Operations of War," says: "During the siege of Paris one railway for some time fed the German Army of, in round numbers, 200,000 men, brought up the siege materials and reinforcements averaging 2000 to 3000 men a day, and even at one time fed Prince Frederick Charles's Army as well." Yet a comparison of these figures with the numbers now engaged shows that many such railways must be employed to supply the armies of the Crown Prince and Prince Rupprecht alone. Indeed, at the present day there are more than double the number of railways crossing the Franco-German frontier alone that there were in 1870.

The first function of the railways of the Continent is to transport men and material from the depôts and factories respectively to the bases; the second, to carry the accumulations of the bases to the distributing points behind the battle zone, and from thence to rail-head. In this connection the somewhat indefinite term rail-head is used to describe the point where traffic abandons the permanent railway system for the roads or light military railways. Simultaneously with the performance of these two functions the railways must continue to serve the needs of the civilian population, and to carry the raw material and products of intensified agricultural and munitions industries.

The communications of an army in the field must be considered as a web, of which the radial filaments are the lines of supply from base to rail-head, and the transverse filaments are the lines running roughly parallel to the front of the army. The army receives its reinforcements and supplies by the radial lines, and effects its concentrations by the lateral lines. The speed with which an army can concentrate for attack or defence in any particular sector, and the number of men and guns that can be maintained in that sector, depend eventually upon the perfection of the railway system behind it. Roads and canals cannot make up for the deficiencies of the railways. The former deteriorate rapidly under heavy traffic, must be kept as free as possible for the movement of infantry, and in any case are unsuitable for the rapid transport of heavy material. The latter, although admitting of the economical conveyance of stores and ammunition, and also the transport of the wounded, have the disadvantage that traffic upon them must necessarily be slow.

Rapidity of transport becomes of the greatest importance where *personnel* is concerned. If it is required to convey a body of men from one point to another, three considerations determine the speed with which this operation can be carried out—the time taken to entrain the men, the time occupied by the journey, and the time taken in detraining. Of these, by far the most important is the time taken in entraining. The principles governing this are comparatively simple. It takes approximately one hour to get a troop train into position, to load it up with men, horses, and vehicles, and to move it off, so that another can take its place. Further, a troop train will carry, over first-class railways, half an infantry battalion or two batteries of artillery. Suppose it is required to move a force of ten battalions a distance of a hundred miles by rail. At each end of the

journey a station with facilities for unloading four trains at a time is available. Entrainment in this case will take five hours, and detrainment a little less, say, four hours. Under certain circumstances it may be possible to use a group of stations at either end, in which case the number of troop trains that can be dispatched within an hour is limited only by the capacity for traffic of the railway between the points of entrainment and detrainment. It is reckoned that the average capacity for traffic of a double line of railway is six trains per hour each way. During the embarkation of the original British Expeditionary Force in 1914 the trains were run into the docks at the rate of five per hour.

The actual speed of the trains is of far less importance than the speed with which entrainment and detrainment are carried out. In the example given above, suppose the average speed of the trains during their journey to be twenty miles per hour. The time consumed in entrainment will be five hours; the last train will reach its destination five hours later, and another hour will be required in which to unload it, giving a total of eleven hours for the whole operation. Now, suppose that the speed of the trains be doubled. The last train will then reach its destination two and a half hours after the completion of entrainment, and an hour will still be required in which to unload it, giving a total of eight and a half hours for the complete operation. In other words, doubling the speed of the trains decreases the total time required by little more than twenty per cent.

The speed attained on the journey being thus of relatively small importance where the movement of large bodies of troops is concerned, it follows that the route taken is immaterial. In peace-time the speed of passenger trains, and consequently the directness of the route, is of primary importance. Millions of pounds have been spent by competitive companies in shortening the routes between important centres, so as to enable the time occupied by the journey between those centres to be reduced. In war the directness of the route is far less important than its gradients. If it takes more than one engine to haul each troop train, the number of these that can be run within the hour may become limited by considerations of the number of engines



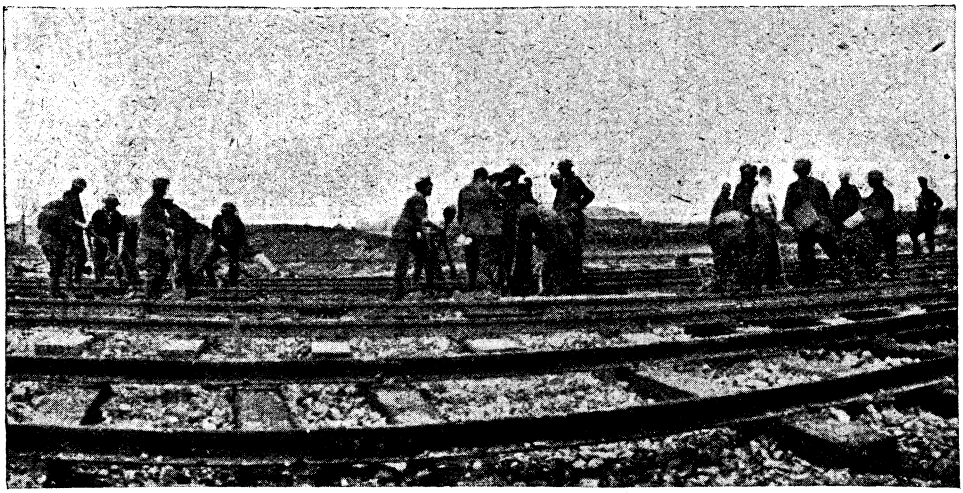
THE RAILWAY TRACK AT BEAUCOURT.

From an official photograph.

available. Again, if more than one route exist between the point of entrainment and the point of detrainment, it may be possible to reduce the total time by running some of the trains by one route and some by another. In the case of a railway system connecting a base with a series of rail-heads, troops may be run by one route, ammunition by another, and supplies by a third, without appreciable loss of time to the traffic using the longest route. Further, the fact that the direct route between two points has been made unusable by a hostile advance that brings it under effective shell-fire, need not imply any vital loss of time in hurrying up reinforcements, so long as an alternative, though possibly more devious, route exists.

these "railway defiles" one after another, and so to isolate the British armies operating north of the river from the French on the south. The Germans themselves have always realised the importance of the multiplication of crossing places, especially since the destruction of bridges from the air became a possibility. The number of railway bridges across the Rhine, for instance, has been greatly increased during the last few years, and there are now more than twenty points where double-line railways cross the river.

The general strategic situation of the present War may be regarded as follows: The Central Powers are bounded by Neutral States, including Russia; by the sea, which



MAKING A NEW RAILWAY TRACK ON THE

From an official

In this connection a word may be said as to the importance of what may be called "railway defiles." It will readily be seen, by reference to any small-scale map, that in crossing any natural obstacle, such as a large river or a chain of mountains, a railway system converges from either side to a few important junctions on the obstacle itself, at which junctions, bridges, or tunnels are situated. If these junctions be captured, destroyed, or brought under effective shell-fire, communication between the two halves of the system on either side of the obstacle is broken. The lower Somme is a case in point. Bridges exist at three points—Amiens, Cordé-Folie, and Abbéville. The aim of the first German offensive of 1918 was probably to capture

is closed to them by the superior might of the Allied Fleets; and by a ring of armies which close the gaps between the seas and the Neutral States. The ring of armies may be considered as different wings of the same force, the British, Belgians, French, and Americans in France and Belgium being the western wing, the Italians the southern wing, the Allied Forces in Salonika the south-eastern wing, and the Palestine and Mesopotamia Forces the eastern wing. All these wings must be supplied from bases lying outside the circle, situated in England, France, America, and Italy, and in even more remote countries. The armies of the Central Powers, on the contrary, are supplied from bases within the circle, situated in Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, and Turkey. It

is obvious that the latter are able to employ railways to a far greater extent than the Allies. For instance, railways can supply all their needs in the matter of moving troops from one front to another, whereas the Allies are compelled to employ the much slower methods of sea transport. Even where communication by railway between the Allied fronts exists, it is greatly restricted. For instance, there are only two "railway defiles" through the mountain barrier between France and Italy, the Mont Cenis Tunnel and the coast-line through Mentone.

Where an army is occupying a series of positions that lie roughly upon an arc of a circle, and is based upon sources of supply situated within that circle, it is said to be operating upon *interior* lines. Conversely, when it occupies a series of positions that are divergent relatively to its lines of communications, it is said to be operating upon *exterior* lines. The most perfect example of these two methods of operation is a fortress completely invested by a besieging force. The garrisons of the outlying works are approximately equidistant from their base, the town that forms the heart of the fortress. The besiegers, on the contrary, are at varying distances from any one base behind their lines. The different effect of these converse situations upon communications is obvious. The defenders have no difficulty in rushing reinforcements or supplies to any threatened point, while the besiegers have in any case further to send their reinforcements and supplies, as, apart from any other consideration, the length of similar arcs of concentric circles varies in their distance from the common centre.

It is evident that, on a large scale, the Central Powers are in the position of the defenders of a fortress, of which the Allies are the besiegers. The former are reinforced and supplied from bases within the circle of investment, the latter from bases outside that circle. It is obvious that the railway problems confronting the Allies, acting upon exterior lines, are far greater than those confronting the Central Powers, acting upon interior lines. A glance at the map will make this plain. Suppose, for example, the Central Powers wished to deliver an attack upon the Salonika Front with a number of divisions taken from the Front in Flanders. They can employ direct railway communication across the chord of the arc. The Allies, on the contrary, if they wish to reinforce the threatened front from the same area, must transport their troops by rail and sea by a route that runs outside the circumference of the arc.



BRITISH WESTERN FRONT IN FRANCE.
photograph.

Space will not permit of an examination of the strategic value of the railways in all the theatres of war, but a very brief survey may be attempted of the railway situation on the Western Front. Even taking this Front by itself, the principle of interior and exterior lines is clearly seen. Ever since the last weeks of 1914, when the battle of position first took definite form, the Allies

have been upon exterior lines, firstly, because their armies had to be fed from bases in both France and England, and, secondly, from the shape of the battle-line. The Channel ports had to be defended, and consequently the line took up a direction roughly north and south as far as the Aisne. Then it turned nearly eastward, covering Paris and the bulk of France, and finally it adjusted itself to the line of the fortresses of Verdun, Toul, and Belfort. The Germans lay within the angle of this rough and straggling L, easy of defence on their part by the comparatively short distances that reserves had to cover to reach any threatened point. The Allies lay round the outside of the L, with long lateral communications between the various armies that composed their forces.

So far as the railways were concerned, the situation was not greatly altered until the retreat of the Germans in the region of the Somme, early in 1917. For rather more than two years, that is, both sides were enabled to use the same bases, rail-heads, distributing centres, and network of lines connecting them. Broadly speaking, this means that they adapted the railways as they existed before the War to the requirements of the situation, supplementing them by light railways to serve local needs, and widening and improving lines that, although sufficient to carry the peace-time traffic of the district, had not sufficient capacity for the added military traffic.

The permanent railway system of the theatre of operations has been throughout the War a decisive factor in strategy, and the importance of an advance or retirement is often to be gauged by the lines of railway that it gains or abandons. It is therefore interesting to glance at the arrangement of the chief threads of this network; but, before doing so, one important difference between the functions of railways on the Continent and in England must be noted, namely, the existence of a formidable competitor to the Continental railways as far as the carriage of bulky goods is concerned. Had it not been for the existence of a highly-developed inland waterway system, the French railways would have been richer in rolling-stock and facilities for loading and unloading. Canals, though admirably adapted for transport in peace-time, do not afford sufficiently rapid means of communication for any but the less important conditions of war, and they can hardly be said to be in any sense a substitute for railways in the theatre of military operations.

The railway system of France, though developed primarily with regard to commercial requirements, has since 1870 been adapted to the needs of the defence of the country. It radiates from Paris, from which centre main lines run towards the frontiers. Crossing these main arteries are many important lines connecting industrial districts with one another, and affording lateral communication between the various main line systems. For instance, it is possible to travel from Lille, on the Northern Railway, to any town on the Eastern Railway, by an important lateral railway through Douai, Cambrai, and St. Quentin to Laon. These lateral communications have been most highly developed round Paris, mainly with a view to their use in mobilisation. Congestion was most to be feared at the centre of the network, and consequently railway construction aimed at achieving conditions by which men and material could proceed from their source in any part of France to their destination on the eastern frontier. France expected an invasion from Germany, and made preparations accordingly. The railway system towards the fortresses of Verdun, Nancy, Apinal, and Belfort, and to the intervening country, is admirably adapted to the purposes of war, and is largely responsible for the fact that the enemy has always been held on this front. What France did not expect was an invasion through Belgium, and consequently the railway system on the Franco-Belgian frontier was never developed with an eye to the concentration of troops.

The German railway system, owing to the fact that the various component States of the present Empire had developed their communications to suit their own needs rather than those of Germany as a whole, does not radiate from a common centre, as in the case of the French system. Berlin, although the focus of the Prussian railways, is not comparable with Paris as the centre of the German system, and is not provided with similar facilities for passing trains round the city itself. The main features of the German railways are the number of routes from west to east, and the facilities for concentration on both eastern and western frontiers. In the east especially strictly strategic railways abound, far beyond the needs of such districts as East Prussia in peace-time. The Russian gauge is broader than that of the rest of Europe, and consequently the number of connecting points between the two systems is not great; but

material was always kept readily available for the use of German railway troops, in the conversion of the gauge, in rear of an advance. On the German western frontier the development of Rhineland-Westphalia and the Lorraine iron ore districts afforded a pretext for ever-increasing railway construction, but the volume of traffic upon many of these lines reached in peace-time only a very small percentage of their capacity.

The German scheme of invasion through Belgium gave the invaders all the advantages of communication. The French scheme of mobilisation was worked out to effect a concentration on the Franco-German frontier, and, as a matter of fact, was carried out without a hitch. But the same magnificent system of railways did not exist further north, especially in the Departments of Pas de Calais and Nord, where the railways had been developed with a view to the needs of the manufactures of Lille and the coal-mining districts rather than to take part in the scheme of national defence. Lateral communication in particular between the armies operating in the north-east, including the British retiring, roughly, on the Liège-Paris line, *viâ* Maubeuge and St. Quentin, and the main French forces further south, was wholly inadequate. The battle of the Marne found the Allied armies more closely concentrated, and operating in proximity to Paris, conditions which simplified the railway question, and which existed until after the battle of the Aisne.

When trench warfare set in at the close of 1914, the disadvantages under which the northern armies, namely, the British, French, and Belgians, from the sea to the La Bassée Canal, suffered became obvious. From the Channel ports only one main line of railway—that between Lille and Calais, branching at Hazebrouck to Béthune—ran into this zone. With the exception of the line Dunkirk-Hazebrouck, practically all the other feeders, such as the line Boulogne-Aise, were single lines or light railways. From Béthune to Albert conditions were almost worse, both feeders and lateral lines being very scarce, and already fully laden with mineral traffic from the Bruay coal-fields. It was not until the region south of the railway from Amiens to Laon was reached that the battle zone



A RAILWAY ENGINE IN DIFFICULTIES.

From an official photograph.

had behind it the perfectly-developed systems that ran towards the eastern frontier.

On the German side railway conditions were far more favourable. In the extreme north important lines ran to Ghent, Bruges, and Ostend. Below this area was the network connecting Lille, Douai, Cambrai, and St. Quentin with the coal-mining and industrial regions of Belgium and the Valenciennes district of France. Further south the important junctions of Hirson and Charleville were in German hands, with the lines running from them to Laon, Rheims, and Verdun. From thence to the Swiss frontier the German strategic railway system had been designed for just such an eventuality as the present War.

It was not until the battles of the Somme and of the Ancre caused the German retirement upon the "Hindenburg line" in 1917 that the railway situation was altered in any way. This retirement abandoned to the Allies the important junction of Tergnier, and with it the lines to Amiens *viâ* Havre and to Paris *viâ* Compiègne. Other important lines made available to the Allies were those from Amiens to Arras *viâ* Albert, and from Chaulnes towards Cambrai *viâ* Péronne. Both radial and lateral communications were much improved, and the Germans, although their feeders were not greatly affected, lost an important link in their lateral systems. The battle of Arras, that followed soon after, confirmed the Allies in their use of the whole length of the Amiens-Arras line.

The British thrust for Cambrai threatened the use of that important junction by the Germans. This would have been a very serious matter for them, as two important feeders, from Valenciennes and Maubeuge respectively, connect at Cambrai with the main lateral from Lille to St. Quentin and Laon. It must be emphasised that a junction is practically useless so long as it is under effective artillery fire.

The German offensive of 1918 has been largely directed upon points of strategic railway importance. Amiens, one of the railway defiles of the Somme, was undoubtedly the aim of the first; Hazebrouck, the great junction of the north, was the aim of the second. The third was continued until the main line from Paris along the Marne valley to Chalons and the east was cut. Rheims, a mass of ruins, is still of much value from the fact that the great feeder from Charleville joins the lateral to Laon and the lines to Soissons and La Ferté Mélon.

In conclusion, it may be said that the aim of an attacker in modern war is not the capture of so many square miles of country, but of the strategic points that lie within that country, and that of these strategic points the most important are those that control the use of the railways, upon which the movement and supply of the gigantic modern armies depend.

THE GIRL ON THE OTHER SIDE

By M. L. C. PICKTHALL

Illustrated by Dudley Tennant

AS Dick Lewis went up the steps, the front door opened, and old Jaffray's moved face showed against the darkness of the hall. Lewis noticed, with his new and wondering appreciation for the beauty of common things, that it was finely carved as ivory against the shadow. Then he was shaking the old man's hand.

"I'm glad to see you, Mr. Lewis. Glad from my 'eart, sir, if you'll allow me. We were all very glad to hear of your safety. Miss Guida, she's waiting for you ... Yes, in the library, sir."

"Thank you, Jaffray."

He went to the familiar door and opened it, and the woman who had been sitting for an hour, listening for his step and the sound of the opening door, rose and went forward swiftly to meet him. She said only "Dick!" Then, as they clasped hands: "I need not tell you our joy and relief when we heard."

"Thank you, Guida. You had my letter?"

"Yes. I kept it to myself—greedy me! The others don't know you're here yet. And you've come——"

"Just on my way back. To say good-bye."

She smiled, summoning that light speech so many use for a shield and buckler. "Don't! No good-byes between friends. I shall say 'Au 'voir,' as usual."

But he did not respond to her mood. He said gently: "I think 'Good-bye'—and all it means—is a good thing to say between friends." And instantly something cold and frightened rose up in the woman's soul, crying: "He's changed. He's different. Something's happened. This is not Dick!"

She met his eyes, resting on her with a sort of abstract delight. From her pale crinkled hair to her slender feet, she was good for eyes to rest on: many eyes had told her so. But Dick Lewis seemed for the first time to see her at a very far distance, and the dumb fear at her heart spread to her body, so that she pressed her hands hard together to prevent them shaking.

"I—want to hear about your escape, Dick," she said aloud.

There was a long pause. At last he turned to her with a simplicity as strange as it was new. "And I—want to tell you, Guida. I came to tell you. But—I don't quite know how to do it without hurting you. You've been so good to me, you see."

Her eyes met his again. "Don't think of me," she said clearly. "I knew from your letter there was something you wanted to tell me. Don't think of me, except that I want to listen, and always want to—help, if I can. Wait till I get settled comfy. There! Go on."

He leaned forward and touched her hand an instant. "You're a dear," he said rather huskily. "You've been listening to my tales for—five years or so, isn't it? Well, listen to the last. Your friendship has been the greatest comfort those five years have known."

Her eyes were like steel as she said, with careful lightness: "But why speak of it in the past tense, Richard?"

He smiled gravely; she felt his kindness reaching out to her, as he had reached out his hand—a rather pitiful kindness. He said: "Because it really is good-bye, Guida. Because—this time—I don't think I shall come back."

"You mean——?"

His eyes looked beyond her; for a moment she simply ceased to exist for him, and she saw it. More to this unseen presence than to her he went on absently: "I—know it. I'm only—on loan, as it were . . ."

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"'I was swimming by instinct when I came to myself . . . there was some sort of wreckage floating near, and I

She said at once: "You'll have to tell me the whole thing. You owe me that."

"Yes, I owe you that. And so much more. . . If only I can make you understand!"

Sheer fright was sickening her. A hundred broken words beat on her like sleet. Exposure—shock—was his mind affected? That small, crying voice repeated over and over: "What is it? Oh, what is it? What's happened to him? What does he mean?" She did not know she had spoken the last words aloud till he answered them.

"I mean that I'm quite sure I shall not live longer than the War lasts."

"But you've come through safely—through everything—up to now!"

He smiled at her affectionately across that great new distance. "And it's so unlike me to go in for 'warnings' and bogies, eh? But this is different. This is not a bogy. It's a reasoned assurance that if there is any justice—or any mercy, Guida—to which the soul of man may trust, I shall not survive the War."

She managed a bewildered smile also. "You look very much alive, Dick?"



made for it . . . it gave a bit with my weight. Then I saw someone else clinging to the other side of it—a girl.'"

"Yes. It's not my own life, though. It's a loan—for a time and a purpose. When that time and that purpose are fulfilled——"

She heard her own voice saying steadily: "Try to make me understand, Dick."

He answered at once: "I'll try, Guida.

"You know all the newspaper part of it. You know the ship was torpedoed without warning, that she sank in eight minutes, that the sea was so rough only three boats were launched safely? Yes. Well, you know as much of that part of it as I do, then. For I fell when she heeled to the explosion, and either struck my head or was struck by something. I remember nothing till I found myself fighting upward out of the sea—not much then; I was pretty far gone.

"'All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me.' You've read that. So had I. But it is a strange thing to *feel* it.

"I was swimming by instinct when I came to myself. My head felt as if it was split in two, and I could scarcely see, what with dizziness and salt water. But there was some sort of wreckage floating near, and I made for it. It was one of those collapsible

canvas boats. I don't know where it came from. It was floating, crumpled and bottom up. The air caught under it made it float like a buoy, but it gave a bit with my weight. Then I saw someone else clinging to the other side of it—a girl.

"I was quite possessed of myself, you know, Guida, but awfully sick and weak. I said: 'Will it bear two, d'you think?' And she said: 'Yes, rather. Can you get hold of it?'

"I got hold of it after a fashion. My hands didn't seem to belong to me. She watched me across the keel with some anxiety. I misread this and said: 'I'll just rest on it a bit, and then swim off and find something else.' She said at once: 'Please don't. If we keep the gunwale under each side, the air won't leak out. It kept bobbing up before you came. You're a soldier, aren't you? I saw you on board.'

"I said: Yes, I was a soldier; wounded, sent south, and just on my way back. Couldn't say I'd noticed her on board; I hadn't. I noticed her now, though. She was quite young. Her hair was tied in a sopping tail at the back of her neck, school-girl fashion; her face was fair, rather square, perfectly calm, and streaming—I thought at first with sea-water. Then I saw it was with tears. She saw me look at her, and said at once: 'There were children on board, you know, and I was playing with them this morning. Jolly lucky for us that it's not cold, and that we can both swim.' I said: Yes, jolly lucky. . . ."

He stopped—was silent so long that the woman listening stirred and drew a long breath like a sob. He looked at her quickly. "You and I," he went on in a low voice, "we've talked so much of life and—death, and what death means. And there, with that girl, nearer to it than I've ever been before, I hadn't a thought or a word different to what you'd have at a tea-party. She talked a good deal—rather off-hand and slangy, like a boy—of a waistcoat and a certain Miss Matthews. 'We'd only one,' she said, 'and, of course, I put it on Miss Matthews, and she sat up all night in it, reading "Gold Dust." . . . Beastly little books!'" She said: When did I think we'd be picked up? And I said: 'Oh, any moment!'—though I had the greatest doubts if we'd be picked up at all. Then wave after wave of pain and sickness came over me. My head was on fire. I thought I must let go. But I hung on, really because I didn't want to leave the girl alone. When I came out of 'em, she—she comforted me. I don't know how. She just said: 'Stick to it—oh, *do* stick to it! You can manage it a bit longer, and a ship is sure to turn up.' So I kept on managing it a bit longer.

"I'd have done better to let go then.

"Once, though, I must have fainted, or something. I came to, and she had swum round and was supporting me. I don't know what I said, but she dived back to the other side like a fish. 'Jolly lucky,' she told me, 'that I went in for swimming. I've two cups.' We talked about the cups, I remember—that Miss Matthews had thought it unladylike to choose cups when you might have had teaspoons instead.

"We must have been two hours in the water. Heavens, such hours! Not that we suffered much; but that passive *waiting* was so strange. It called for every ounce of endurance of soul and body; I've never felt such a strain on me, even in the trenches. And she—that girl—bore it, and better than I. . . ."

He was silent again. Guida listened to the ticking of a little French clock, of which the pendulum was a gilded Love swinging on a wreath of roses. Presently it sounded a small ringing chime, and a peal beaten by iron hammers in a hundred towers could not have been more remorseless than the fairy sound.

"From first to last we saw nothing of the other boats, nor of any other survivors. The sea seemed to have been swept clear even of the tragedy. I did see one smear of smoke on the horizon, but wouldn't draw her attention to it, and it quickly passed.

"I roused from a sort of doze, if it's possible to doze clinging to an upturned boat, with a broken head. The sky seemed lower and darker. The waves seemed to run against it. It was a funny effect. I expected them to splash and flop back. We were very low in the sea. I thought the boat we clung to was lower. And evening was coming on. Our last hope, I thought, would go with day.

"I looked across the keel. That brave child's face was very pale. Her mouth was set into such resolution it made her look old. She said quietly: 'The air's leaking out of the boat.'

"Not a thing could I do or say to help her. I don't hold it's any part of a man's duty to throw dust in the eyes of a plucky girl facing danger, but I *did* long to be able to ease it a bit for her. And beyond

what comfort the mere presence of another human being gave her, I was utterly useless. However, something in her face made me think she'd have been worse off alone, and I resolved to cling on to the last possible moment. But I was very weak and drowsy. I'd have let go and given up if it hadn't been for her.

"'If it sinks any lower,' I told her, 'you must work round to the stern and hold on there, and I'll swim alongside.' I knew I shouldn't swim far, but I thought the thing would serve to keep her head out of the water for another couple of hours, anyway. And then she leaned a little forward and said: 'No!'

"'You must,' I said. But she went on quite quietly: 'No. If this boat will only support one—if only one of us is to be saved—then it must be you.'

"I laughed. I was very angry with her—with that small, steady, white face of hers. I said: 'Don't talk nonsense, if you please. It's all quite bad enough without that. You'll do what you're told.' I suppose I was awfully rude to her. But she made me listen.

"'That's all right,' she said in her boyish way, 'when other things are all right. But everything's upside down now. Nothing is as usual. You know what I mean. And, of the two, you *must* be saved, if there's a choice, just *because* of—of women and children, just *because* you're a man and can fight, and can help to stop—this. Don't you see? Can't you see?'

"I talked a lot more—talked like a Dutch uncle. I asked her, among other things, if she thought I was a German. It must have been funny, we two specks of human beings arguing like that in the middle of the Atlantic! Her arguing was not the least use, of course. She to argue down the deepest instinct there is in the nature of any decent man in our race! She, that little thing! She was silent at last. I thought I'd convinced her of the sheer, rank, outrageous impossibility of her idea. And all the time I was longing to let go there and then, only I read in her face somehow—how does one know things at such times?—that her one fear was just being left alone. She wasn't afraid of death, but she *was* afraid of the empty grey twilight and the empty, empty sea.

"We did not speak for a long time after that. We were too tired. That wild suggestion of hers never crossed my mind again. I was thinking—chiefly of going ratting with Gherkin, the terrier I left with the Dunstables! I was in a sort of dream again. But once she spoke, low and clearly. 'Hold on,' she said. 'Hold on. Stick it out. It's your duty. You're not your own now. You belong to every weak and defenceless thing there is in the world.' I didn't quite take in what she said, or its meaning, but I lifted my head—I was resting it against the bulge of the broken canvas keel—and nodded to her, and she nodded back at me. Her eyes were starry bright, I remembered afterwards. Then I let my head down again, and shut my eyes a minute."

Lewis turned slowly, so that he faced Guida full. She saw, with an indescribable wrench of pain, that his brown cheeks were glistening wet; and as she saw it, he wiped the tears openly on his knuckles, like a child. His eyes, looking into hers, held in them the reflection of a great light. And he was miles away, separated from her by measureless emotion as by time and space.

He said quite steadily: "I never saw her again. When I remember anything again, I was in the vast blaze of a searchlight—an agony of light it seemed to me, boring through me. Then there were black shapes of men trying to lift me into a boat. My hands were so clenched and numbed on the gunwale of that canvas thing that they had to cut free the bits I was hanging on to, for fear I left that girl in the lurch! And I shouted at them: 'Have you got the young lady? Have you got the young lady? Take her first.' And one of them put his ear down to my mouth and listened carefully, and looked at the others. And then he said very gently: 'There ain't no young lady, sir. You're the only one on that boat.'"

Pity rushed over the frozen woman in the chair, pity warm and blinding. "Oh, the poor child!" she said. "Oh, the poor child!"

But Lewis swung on her almost angrily. "Don't pity her," he said at once. "There's nothing to pity in such a royal sort of generosity. She and her gift are not to be pitied. Don't waste pity on—on either of us, Guida."

Meeting her dumb, bewildered look, after a moment he went on: "If I'm sure of anything in heaven or earth, I'm sure that she gave her life for mine—that she let go her hold on that boat deliberately—to give me a better chance, because she thought mine was the more useful life."

"You can't be sure, Dick."

"But I am sure. She was in better case to stick to that boat than I was. She *lent* me my life—the divine, unpardonable child! She lent it, in her own words, to all the weak things of the world, because I could fight on their side till such things as *that* were done away. I take it so. It's not my own life any more. It's—it's a loan till the end of justice has been reached, the end we're all fighting for—she no less than I, God knows. And when the end's attained, He'll call in the loan . . . What a lot we've talked about—things—before, and here, I suppose, is a stranger thing than all! But it doesn't seem strange to me—just natural. One didn't exactly run away from it before, you know. The difference now is only that I shall run to meet it."

She could find no relief in thought or feeling. He sat quite still in his pet chair, staring at the rug, and as she watched him she saw a terror opening before her, a grey desolation. The familiar room, the afternoon sunlight in squares on the carpet, the faint rattle of a wind-stirred blind—all the old familiar things were there. But in the half of an hour the soul of them was changed past any recall of hers.

She tried once, timidly, desperately. "But—but she gave it to you."

He answered quickly: "For that—just for that! I've no right to keep it longer."

"But, Dick, you can't be *sure*."

He looked at her happily. "But I am sure. Sure, I mean, that I shall not be required to carry the burden of my debt too long. I've had time to—to think things out, you see."

She stared at him. She was fighting—fighting with a wild desire to run at him and seize him, and hold him with her mere bodily hands, as she could hold him with nothing else, against whatever it was that took him so far away. And all the time silly words stormed her: "Exposure, shock, nervous obsession—yes, that's it, nervous obsession. A mere presentiment!" The familiar room, the familiar figure—she saw them in a glass darkly. She knew it was no use fighting; something confronted her, impalpable, yet implacable as death—implacable as death, yet wearing the face of life, of love.

He was watching her with infinite kindness from that great and starry distance. "I didn't do wrong to tell you, did I?" he asked. "There was more or less of an unspoken compact—we always talked out our precious philosophies. How thin they seem—now! . . . And I thought you wouldn't—grieve, if you knew why, when it—comes. I thought I could show you grief was—out of place!"

How dreadfully sure he was!

She bent her head, and after a minute went on calmly: "When do you go?"

"This evening." And afterwards she could remember no interval between his saying so and his rising to go. A few more brief sentences, broken words of courage that are on a thousand lips, then he was at the door, turning with a smile. She did not press him to stay. Life was going with him, but better it should go, she thought. She knew afterwards that he had held her hands, kissed her once, and thanked her for being "the truest friend ever man had." But their souls were divided with a barrier of great and shining things in which she had no share.

"Good-bye, Guida!"

"No, Dick, no! Au 'voir!"

For a moment that light seemed to include her, to shine on her, too. Then it was gone with him, and the door closed.

She stayed quiet, as she was, for a long, long time; then she slid forward very slowly to the floor, and knelt at the chair, her face in her hands. Later she rose and went to a glass, and mercilessly examined her beauty.

"A little while, my dear," she said, "a little while, and you'll be old—and lonely! Would it have made any difference if you'd told him you loved him?"

"Would it have made it seem happier to Guida," Dick Lewis was asking himself, "if I could have told her I'll be glad to go when the time comes? Not only willing, but glad, for the sake of the chance in a thousand that I'll find that girl again—the girl whose name I never knew, the girl on the other side?"

THE HOUSE OF ILLUSION

By RALPH STOCK

Illustrated by Steven Spurrier

THE Army had only one thing to say to 29476 Cpl. Compton, J., and when it was said, he found himself on the wet pavement of the Vauxhall Bridge Road with a dull pain in his left hip, and his freedom.

It was a strange sensation. He appreciated for the first time the feelings of a bird released from its cage after three years' confinement. Not that he had anything against the cage. The Army had treated him fairly, even generously—war is war—but he knew that he was a changed man. It would be interesting to discover what was left of himself.

For a while he sat in a secluded corner of a cheap restaurant in unaccustomed "mufti," trying to pick up the loose threads of his life where they had been dropped, and finding it surprisingly difficult. Things seemed so remote. What had he been before plunging into the maelstrom? Ah, yes, a planter of cocoa-nuts on the other side of the world. For some reason it sounded ludicrous now, yet that was what he had been, and that was what he would have to go on being; it was all he really knew, besides the machine-gun.

He supposed that Delaniva was still in existence — Delaniva of the palm groves tumbling to the sea, of yellow sunlight and deep shadow; of hard work in tropical heat, and well-earned rest in a wicker chair on the verandah, with coolie chants drifting up from the "lines," muffled to weird beauty by the eternal chorus of the surf on the barrier reef; of dear old blind Metcalf and Jill—who, by the way, must be three years older now, a big difference in a girl of seventeen—and her poisonous little brother Fred. It all seemed an unconscionable time ago, as well as being fifteen thousand miles away. Yet he remembered what Metcalf had said when he left the blessed old overseer's outhouse for Gallipoli and France: "I can't see you these days, Jim, but I know you all the better for that, and I want you to remember Delaniva as home." Then, with the suddenly changed manner of a man who has caught himself on the verge of displaying sentiment: "I have made arrangements for you to have half-pay while you're away. And I want you back, Jim; remember that."

"If I get through, I'll come," Compton had answered.

He was brought back to earth, and more particularly to the cheap restaurant in the Vauxhall Bridge Road, by his bill being slapped on the imitation marble-topped table with a vigour that sent a dagger's point of pain to his left hip. He limped into the street.

Nine weeks later he squatted in the bows of an outrigger sailing canoe, beating up the Tai Leba coast against a south-east trade, and absorbing the sights and sounds that he loved. There was something left, after all, he mused. The world was still beautiful, when it was left alone. Life was distinctly worth living, in spite of a hip that never let one quite forget it.

Out of an opalescent haze the familiar outline of the island took shape. Compton's binoculars were fastened upon it. Every volcanic crag and coral beach was known to him. At that moment the past three years were as though they had never been. He was again overseer on Delaniva. There was the bungalow, glinting white among the mangoes and mummy apples, and there was the landing, thrusting its unlovely length

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into the fair face of the Pacific. And there—the glasses were pressed closer to his eyes—there surely was the plantation flowing in gentle green waves down the mountain-side. The place was so clearly photographed on Compton's mind that it was a full five minutes before he could believe that his eyes were not at fault. The thing was incredible, yet there was no gainsaying it—not a palm reared its feathery head on Delaniva! What he had seen was grass—grass and prone palm trunks littering the mountain-side.

Hurricane? The thought was discarded as soon as conceived. A hurricane rends and crushes; it does not slice palms neatly a foot from the ground and stack them ready for burning. And these were palms—cocoa-nut palms that take seven weary years of labour before they mature! What, in the name of all that was ghastly, had happened to Delaniva?

There was no one at the landing. The copra punts lay at their moorings, green with disuse. Compton climbed the familiar sea-washed steps with difficulty, and passed through the drying-yards. There were no coolie women tending the copra. There was no copra to tend.

Compton limped up the powdered coral pathway to the bungalow, and had swung open the mosquito door, when a black hand touched his arm. It was Soon, the house-boy of doubtful origin and undoubted virtues, who had been with the Metcalfs when Delaniva was planted.

"You no can," he ordered peremptorily, before the sight of Compton's face set him gibbering and clucking like a monkey.

It took some time to convince him that the returned overseer was flesh and blood and not a spirit from the battlefield. This accomplished, Compton at last succeeded in eliciting the information that "Delaniva, him stop all along beetlie."

It was enough. Compton knew only too well the dread rhinoceros beetle, that riddles a cocoanut-palm like a sieve in the course of a few months.

"You no tell 'um," enjoined Soon in a penetrating whisper, jerking a gnarled thumb at the door. "'Um no savvy."

Compton nodded and passed inside.

Old man Metcalf, in his accustomed stiffly-starched ducks resembling plate armour, sat in the mosquito-proof office, pretending to write. He had never given in. Even after the last bout of fever, that had robbed him of sight, he had claimed to be able to answer his own correspondence. Delaniva lay outspread in his mind like a detailed map, and his grip of plantation affairs had tightened rather than relaxed, as his overseer well knew. And now he was in the office, still clinging to the belief that his hands were on the reins.

"Who's that?" he said sharply, at sound of the strange footfall.

It was welcome enough for Compton to see the old man's face brighten at his overseer's name.

With whisky and sparklet at elbow, they talked the big hand round the clock. Like most men from the firing-line, Compton had little to say about it, and the conversation soon turned on Delaniva.

"Good, good!" said Metcalf to Compton's glib lie that the place had never looked better. "You must have noticed the ten acres of young trees east of the Hog's Back. They've come on, eh?"

Compton looked out through the window at the devastated hillside, then at the anxious face turned to him, and said that they had.

Metcalf's evident relief was his reward.

"I'm glad you think so," he said. "I had an idea—it was only a chance remark of Fred's that gave it me—but I had an idea those trees were not up to Delaniva standard. The seed nuts came from Tai Lemba; but there," he added, tapping the table with his thin, sensitive fingers, "call it a blind man's whim. And here I am worrying you with business before you're settled. Time enough when you've been over the place and handed in one of your old reports, Jim. That's what I want. Jill's a good girl, but——"

"Jill?" queried Compton involuntarily.

"Yes," answered Metcalf, with a hint of embarrassment, "Jill's been running the place while you were away. Fred went to Sydney. Young fellow, you know—must see something besides Delaniva. Ah, here they come!"

With a blind man's sharpened sense of hearing, he had detected the beat of horse's hoofs on the beach road long before it reached Compton.

"I must tell you before they come," added Metcalf quickly. "It may be, as I say, a whim, but I have a feeling—it amounts to that—a feeling that something is being held back from me; they are hiding something. Oh, I know you are probably smiling, but there it is, and I have no one—do you understand?—no one to speak to about it."

Metcalf's thin, upright body stiffened in its plate-armour ducks. His voice held the ring of old days.



"A black hand touched his arm."

"I shall expect a full report from you to-morrow night, Jim."

"Very good, sir," said Compton, and, in answer to an almost imperceptible nod of dismissal, left the "office."

From the verandah of the overseer's outhouse he watched a white figure astride a Tongan pony approaching along the beach road. At a glance he knew it was Jill Metcalf, but it was Jill with a difference. The short drill skirt and workmanlike solar topee were the same, and the mist of dark hair about the well-poised head, but this was not the boyish girl who had cantered at his

side through the palm grove after scampering Herefords. There were the same quick, practised movements as she opened the compound gate with her riding-crop, the same easy carriage of her slim figure in the saddle, but Compton was conscious of a vague embarrassment at prospect of the meeting. Embarrassment, with Jill! It vanished at her first word.

"Jim!"

She dismounted and ran up the steps.

"I suppose it *is* you?" she said. "May I pinch instead of shaking hands?"

This accomplished, she sat on the top step, her hands clasped about her knees.

"And now, if you'll kindly tell me all about it," she suggested. "Did you bayonet any?"

Compton was acutely aware that her frank, wallflower eyes were inspecting him.

"I was in the machine-guns," he said; "quite tame compared with the bombers. I'm no use any more; that's why I've come back."

"I see," said Jill, looking out over the Pacific.

"No decorations—oh, bar corporal's stripes."

"Corporal Jim," murmured the girl.

"29476, to be exact," supplied Compton.

He sat beside her. She was the same, he told himself, because he knew there was a difference. "Now, do you mind telling *me* all about it?"

Jill looked round at him.

"I suppose I'd better," she said. "We must get it over. Delaniva's done. But you can see that. You saw Dad?"

"Yes. He looks well."

"You're just saying that—thanks. Was Soon awake?"

"I don't know, but he caught me with the door half-open."

Jill's face fell grave.

"That was a near thing," she said. "But I can't always be there, and—and there's no one else."

She turned to him with a touch of her old impulsiveness.

"Oh, it's been the devil, Jim—the very devil, sometimes!"

"Of course it has," said Compton.

"It was all I could do to get the inspector not to tell Dad. It would have killed him—it would kill him now. I promised to have Delaniva torn up by the roots in a month. I don't know what I didn't promise. So he sent a notification instead, and we started work the next day. It was like pulling teeth. But you can imagine. There are only fifteen acres more to do; then comes the burning. That's how we stand to-day, Mr. Overseer. What do you think of my stewardship?"

Jill paused. Her finger-tips were white with the pressure of her clasped hands. Compton had nothing to say—nothing, that is, that would not sound puerile. What did he think of her stewardship? How could he tell her that without telling her the rest?

"I have to hand in a report to-morrow night," he said bluntly.

"Oh, that's easy," returned Jill. "You can read him one of your old ones."

"He feels you are hiding something from him."

"He told you that?"

"Yes. He got the impression from some chance remark of Fred's."

A deep flush slowly surged over Jill's face. She looked out to sea to hide it, then suddenly turned on him.

"Am I doing right or wrong?" she demanded. "I want to know. Am I to tell Dad and destroy the illusions that are his life, or am I to lie, lie, lie, until I begin to wonder if I shall ever speak the truth again?"

"There's no question in it that I can see," said Compton. "Why? Does anyone think otherwise?"

Jill did not answer. Her lips were compressed.

"It was easy at first," she went on presently. "I looked upon it as a sort of game, and it pleased him, satisfied him so. But it grew more and more difficult. You know how sharp he is. Then, quite suddenly somehow, I saw all that they meant to him, these illusions I was keeping alive, and I was frightened. But there was no turning back. I used to shut my eyes sometimes and see Delaniva as it used to be, and try and imagine what it would be like to open them and see the place—as it is. That made me go on. And I've failed," she ended abruptly. "He feels we're hiding something——"

"We must begin all over again," said Compton a trifle hurriedly—there was a hint of tears in her eyes. "Others have had to do it; we must do it, until there's no need for illusions."

Jill smiled at him.

"Yes," she said. "That's all."

But Compton knew that it was not all. Less than an hour after the arrival of Mr.

Fred Metcalf, direct from an atmosphere of stagnant tobacco-smoke, whisky, and cards at the Settlement club, Compton knew that it was more than the ruin of Delaniva that troubled Jill.

He burst into the overseer's outhouse at about eleven o'clock, and talked loudly until past twelve. When Compton had left Delaniva, Fred Metcalf was in the making, an unbalanced youth of sixteen. His visit to Sydney, with plenty of money and an impressionable mind, had done the rest. His manner was racy.

"Cheerio, old bird! Great to see you back. Stopped one, eh? Rotten luck—and Delaniva on top of it! Thank goodness, I'm out of *that!* Pater saw fit to put Jill in charge, and not sure he wasn't wise, too. Never should have made a nigger-driver, so I had to plough my own furrow, or words to that effect. Struck it lucky in Sydney town, though. Cheeriest bunch you could wish to meet, and making no end of money. It's like shelling peas. You sit at a roll-top desk in George Street, and buy lucerne when it's down, wait until it goes up, which it does like a rocket these days, and—I'm getting back by the next boat."

So much Compton gathered, with Fred perched on the edge of his bed. The rest came later.

There followed busy days in the house of illusion. Compton read his report without a hitch, and answered searching questions with a glibness that surprised himself.

Apparently Metcalf was satisfied, and that was all that mattered. The work of destruction went on. Acre by acre Delaniva was felled to the ground, and burnt when the wind was favourable. And through it all Metcalf sat on the verandah or in his beloved "office," fragile, indomitable, living on dreams.

Then came the night of Compton's eavesdropping. It was a shameless affair. He heard voices in altercation, and he listened.

"Two hundred would do it, and I swear I won't trouble you again, Jill."

"You should have it willingly, if I had it."

"How about a mortgage? I could pay——"

"We *are* mortgaged."

"You mean *you* are. Delaniva's nothing to do with me."

"Very well, then, *I* am."

There followed a short silence of exasperation. Compton could imagine Fred's weak, distorted face. Then—

"You're driving me pretty hard, Jill. Not many fellows would stand it. I'm not asking for much. You don't want to get my back up, do you? Because——"

"Freddie, don't talk so loud, and please don't make a scene!"

"Oh, yes, at it again! Anything, *anything*, except tell the governor the truth. I know you think you're doing right, but there are others, you know. Personally, I'm not so sure."

"What *do* you mean?"

"I'll tell you presently. Look here, will you borrow it from Jim?"

"From Jim! Do you know we owe him half-wages for the past three years, and haven't paid?"

"No, but—— Oh, what's the use? He came back, all the same, didn't he? You know what for as well as I do. What else would bring him back to a hole like this? I don't approve, but then I don't seem to count anyhow."

"Hadn't you better go to bed?"

"There you go, treating me like a kid! I can't stand it!" Fred's voice trembled with passion. "I'm an outsider in my own home, but I'll have you know that I'm a man, and the son of my father. I don't approve of this eternal play-acting, and I won't have it! Is that plain?"

"You mean, if I don't give you this money, you'll tell Dad?"

The voice was tense, but steady.

"I didn't say so."

"But that is what you mean."

"You can take it that way if you like."

"It would kill him."

"I'm not so sure. You've got your precious fairy stories on the brain. Besides, you don't understand; I *must* have the money."

There was dead silence for a space, evidently prolonged beyond Fred's endurance.

"Well, what have you got to say?"

"Nothing."

"You're quite sure?"

"Quite."

There was an indescribable sound of impatience, then the snapping-to of a mosquito-door and footsteps dying away down the passage.

Compton satisfied himself that these last were going in the direction of Fred's bedroom, then went to his outhouse and lay on the bed, staring unseeingly through the white mist of the mosquito-bar.

Throughout the next day the troubled preoccupation in Jill's eyes was more than

Compton could bear. And he knew that she would never confide in him in this matter; her innate sense of loyalty prevented it.

By the evening his mind was made up. He waited for Fred's belated return from the Settlement at a bend in the beach road, smoking and thinking.

He saw clearly that, as in war, there are times when present-day civilisation counts for nothing, and men must hark back to primeval force for the settlement of their differences.

It was a night of blue-black darkness, but the plantation pony knew the road, and Fred was cantering when Compton went out to meet him.

"I want to speak to you for a moment," he said.

Fred's astonishment gave way to quick suspicion.

"What, here?"

"Yes. Do you mind dismounting?"

For some reason, not entirely unconnected with a hand on the pony's rein, Fred obeyed.

"I wanted to tell you," said Compton, "that I overheard all you said to your sister last night."

For a moment—only a moment—Fred was speechless.

"Oh, you did?" he jerked out. "Prying, I suppose."

"Yes," said Compton.

"Into my family affairs."

"Yes."

"Then perhaps"—Fred succeeded in simulating dignified anger—"then perhaps you'll be so good as to tell me what the deuce you mean by it?"

"Certainly," said Compton. "I mean that on no account are you to tell your father what you threatened last night."

"And if I choose to, who's going to stop me?"

"I am."

"How?"

"I'll show you when you begin," said Compton.

Fred had a perfect horror of physical violence, except of the variety that consisted of sitting in a comfortable ringside chair at Rushcutter's Bay, watching prize-fighters wallow in each other's gore. But he had always detested Compton, and now the white heat of hate consumed him. For the first time in his life Fred's blood was up. It was an unpleasant sight. His passion blanched and twisted his face into a thing of venom. It was thrust closer to Compton in the darkness. The voice was a harsh whisper.

"Then I'm going to begin now," it said. "I refuse to be bullied and dictated to by anyone—anyone—least of all you! I'm going now—d'you hear?—*now*—to tell him everything! I—I'll show you two I'm of some account in my own home!"

"My pension is five shillings a week," said Compton, "so I can't stop you the way you wanted, but I shall stop you."

Fred had flung away with a passion of resolve in his eyes when a hand gripped his arm. It was enough. He turned with the fury of a cat and struck blindly, by chance accurately.

Compton had forgotten his hip. He staggered under the impact, to his own disgust collapsed, and lay powerless to move, watching, through a haze of pain, horse and rider cantering off up the beach road.

* * * * *

It was past eleven, but Metcalf was still in the "office." He was busy, he told Jill, when she came to say good night, and she had left him with his dreams. He was happier so.

He sat, an alert, upright figure in his stiffly-starched ducks, until the door had closed, then relaxed. He seemed to crumple into his chair, and lay thinking, thinking, with pinched brow and compressed lips.

Presently, with slow-moving and silent deliberation, he took up his yaka-wood stick and crept from the house. It was the first time he had passed through the compound gate for five years, yet he hardly needed the guidance of his stick, so familiar was the path. They had told him his heart would not stand it. There was nothing the matter with his heart. Surely he could walk through his own plantation. Why had he not done it before? He had been too submissive.

His deliberate steps led him down the path and into the groves. He could feel the encompassing presence of the palms, with their towering trunks and thick green roof of leaves. He tapped them with his stick when they bordered the path, and muttered as he went: "Seventy-five, seventy-six, seventy——" He had come to the end. His stick swept the empty air; his muttering ceased. He advanced uncertainly until his stick encountered something lying on the ground. It was still a palm trunk—the seventy-seventh.

From there onward he found nothing, nothing but prone palm trunks, stacked.

He tore at one with his fingers, and it crumbled under his touch. He sat quite still for a while, then retraced his steps to the bungalow, and crumpled back into his favourite cane chair. It was a night of blue-black darkness, but one of extraordinary clarity to John Metcalf.

* * * * *

He was still sitting there, the careworn lines miraculously smoothed from his face, when Fred Metcalf burst into the sitting-room. He was beyond noticing anything unusual in his sister's presence there at such an hour. She sat at the table, her head pillowed on her arms like a weary child.

"Jill," he jerked out, "we fought down there in the groves. He tried to stop me—by force. He couldn't, that's all; no one can. I——" Something caused him to stop, something indefinable that went to the core of his being.

Jill had looked up. Her eyes held a strange peace as they rested on this brother of hers.

"You're too late, Freddie," she said without resentment; "he can't hear you now."

The quiet finality in her voice brought the dawn of understanding to Fred Metcalf.

"What do you mean?" he asked almost in a whisper.

But he knew. In that moment it was given to him to catch a brief glimpse of himself as he was. Such a rare vision is apt to startle most of us; it awed Fred Metcalf. He turned uncertainly to the door and paused.

"You'll find Jim on the beach road," he muttered dazedly. "I don't quite know what I've done . . . I must try and think . . . Good-bye!"

Jill listened to his footsteps growing fainter down the powdered coral pathway, then hurried down to the beach road.

Compton watched her coming in dull suspense. His own helplessness filled him with unreasoning disgust. He had failed—through no fault of his own, but he had failed.

Jill smiled down at him.

"It's all right," she said, as though comforting a child. And later, with his head resting in her lap: "We won through, Jim. He never knew—until he knew everything."

Compton looked up into her eyes. There was something in them that he had not allowed himself to believe before. Even now he turned aside his head.

"I couldn't help," he said. "I shall never forget that. I'm pretty useless these days, Jill."

"Are you, dear?" she answered, and, leaning down, kissed him on the lips.

TIME, THE PACKMAN.

I MET Old Time, the Packman,
Along a windy way,
With all Life's choice to chaffer
With those who had to pay.
And some for Fame would barter,
And some strove hard for gain,
And some were seeking pleasure,
Although the price was pain.

I caught Old Time, the Packman,
As he was speeding by,
And bade him tell me truly
What gift was best to buy.
He answered: "Gold will tarnish,
And Fame unstable prove,
But if your heart be worthy,
Then pay the price of Love."

I paid Old Time, the Packman,
The price he said was due;
I took the best he offered,
And gave it all to you.
And though Old Time has taken
His pack beyond recall,
I know he told me truly,
For "Love is best of all."

BERNARD MOORE.

THE BALANCE

By LAURENCE NORTH

Illustrated by Norah Schlegel

"I FEAR," said Matron, "I shall have to ask you to give up your room again, Beatrice. This afternoon's arrivals from France are to be heavy. I'm asked to take two extra cot cases, if possible."

"That's all right, Matron. Anything for the boys. I'll see about getting the extra cots put up at once."

"And can you take the cases on as well, dear? You've enough to do in A, as it is, without an annexe ward, but——"

"Right O, Matron! I'm game. All in the day's work."

"You're a brick, Bee."

"Rubbish, Auntie Matron!" The peculiar, unofficial title, used only in the sanctity of private interviews, was one of the odd outgrowths of a state of war. Before the eternal bung of the universe worked loose in August, 1914, Matron had been the Hon. Mrs. Bovingdon, and the pretty nurse, her niece, who now stood beside her table in the office, was Beatrice Chalfont, a damsel upon whose primrose path few shadows had fallen. Popular, a little erratic and irresponsible—but then she was young—Beatrice had taken life as a joyous dance until the day that stole away all her partners at one stroke. She watched the young men of her circle, who were soldiers already, hurry to the field, and the others lay down everything and go off to fit themselves for a new career of doubtful issue. Beatrice was seized, like so many others of her class, with a laudable desire to be of use. She had been a butterfly. She remained a butterfly still in her earlier "war work."

"Vanity of vanities!" she exclaimed at last, in a little moment of self-realisation. She saw herself not very useful; her patriotic efforts were still the pursuit of pleasure thinly disguised. She looked about for something else—something serious. Hospital work, of course! So to her Aunt Bovingdon she ran in a taxi. Mrs. Bovingdon, trained and qualified in the piping times of peace for a day she knew must come, had slipped into her niche when the call sounded, and was bravely employed. She had turned her great house into a private hospital for wounded officers.

Beatrice came in upon her that day like a whirlwind, *mondaine*, exquisite, turned out to the last curl, the last bow of chiffon. She was wildly enthusiastic again, after her brief mood of chastening.

"Take me on, Auntie, do, there's a dear! I want really serious war work. I'll cheer up the poor boys *comme rien*, and be as good as a tonic to them."

Mrs. Bovingdon looked at the applicant with a smile, grave and kindly.

"Take you on for what, Bee?"

"A nurse, to be sure, Auntie. I'll look dinky in a cap and apron, won't I?"

"I will not deny it, dear. But costume's an accident. Sit down and let us talk."

"But you'll take me—you *must*. I've ordered my things."

"Not too expensive, I hope. Well, about this idea of yours, Bee. Do you know, my dear, what it means?"

"Hard work, I suppose you'll say. Haven't I worked? Think of my flag days and charity *matinées*! No end of a fag."

"Yes, Bee, dear, you've been very energetic, but this is different. It means, first of all, training."

"You'll soon train me."

"I've no intention of doing so. Nor could I do it here. Don't think I mean to be a wet blanket, but in this house we have no amateurs. Night and day we fight for precious lives. I can take no risks. But if you're willing to go through the mill, I'll be delighted to put you in the way of learning, and, if you can stay the course, I'll be more than pleased to have you with me when you're fully qualified. Nobody I'd like better, dear. But at present you know—well, just nothing at all about the work."

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Beatrice sat silent, tapping her heel on the floor and looking rather sadly at her aunt.

"Do you realise what this work is, dear, if it's to be rightly done?" Mrs. Bovingdon continued. "It means utter devotion—no thought of self, long hours, broken rest, pitiful and ghastly sights, endurance, courage—courage not born of this world, Beatrice—and it means also knowledge, skill, and a certain moderate attainment in practical science, for which the apprenticeship is long and severe. But that needn't hinder you. This is going to be a long war. You'll be ready in good time for much valuable service, if you really tackle it and last out. Are you equal to it, dear? Personally, I believe you are. Take a day or two to consider. Remember, as a probationer, you'll have to scrub floors and do menial things. It's a hard school, but, my dear, there's no woman's war service quite like it. Others are splendid and necessary, but this is *ours*, above all. I believe we're the happiest and have the greatest satisfaction of the lot. Come back and tell me how you decide."

Beatrice counted the cost, took the plunge, stuck to her job, won out, and a year later took up duty with her aunt. Mrs. Bovingdon rejoiced to have given the right direction to her niece's superabundant energy. Beatrice was a success in every way; she had shed the non-essential and realised the essential in a character naturally rich. Mrs. Bovingdon had but one fear. Knowing human nature, sometimes she wondered how long it would be before one of her brave boys caused a permanent vacancy on her staff. She told herself not to be selfish, but her hospital came first in her thoughts, and Beatrice had become her aunt's right hand.

To-day, when Mrs. Bovingdon was forced to throw personal inconvenience and extra work on someone's shoulders, she knew she might safely turn to Beatrice. That young woman could be trusted to come up smiling, resign her pretty room, retreat to a tiny attic, and undertake her turn with the extra patients.

At the door of the office she turned.

"Who are the highly-favoured persons who are getting my room? Do you know yet, Auntie Matron?"

Mrs. Bovingdon looked down at a list.

"I'm giving you Captain David Erskine, Black Watch—shattered arm; very serious—for one."

"And the other?"

"Captain John Killigrew, Royal Fusiliers—shrapnel in head and shoulder, shock, temporarily blind; serious."

"Two centurions! Very well. I'll be ready for them when they come."

There was just a trace of excitement in Beatrice's voice. Outside the door she stopped.

"Should I," she asked herself—"should I have asked Auntie Matron to make any change?"

She considered for a moment, and then decided to let things alone. If Fate had played her a curious trick, she would accept it, and see what would be the upshot. Fate had played a very curious trick, one that held possible comedy or tragedy, or that strange blending of both which strikes the deepest note of pathos in human things.

"I hope," she thought, as she went about her preparations, "it won't be Bannockburn over again with my Englishman and my Scotsman!"

That, however, if it was to come, lay some distance ahead. Many days must pass before the patients would be able—if they were ever able—to take up former threads of life.

Beatrice saw the transformation of her own room well under way, and then went off to her attic to snatch a few hours' sleep. She was on night duty. Eleven o'clock found her at her post in a curious excitement. She had thought she was too hardened by this time to allow emotion to usurp the merely professional, but this case was unlike all others. The sense of contrast threatened that steadiness of nerve which she had come to flatter herself no incident of her work could shake, now that she was an old hand. But those two maimed figures on the cots, and the memories they recalled, combated that impersonal detachment which carries a nurse over the roughest stretches of duty. Beatrice, try as she would, could not regard her patients merely as "cases," to be watched with a cool, scientific eye, alert for the minutest symptoms and changes, of which accurate report must be made in due time to the M.O. Back upon her crowded memories of what these two broken men had been in days of gallant health and happiness. The "then" and the "now" struck her heart chill. It was more than she could bear. She really ought to have acted on her first impulse. She could do her patients no justice at this rate. It was not too late even now to explain everything to her aunt and ask to be relieved. But no. To shirk would be cowardice. This task had come her way by some odd dispensation of

Providence. She would go through with it. With the resolution came a sense of growing strength. She fought with natural tears, gave way for a moment, found relief, and faced her spell of duty with a smile.

Once at her post, Beatrice found her task easier than she had feared. The professional habit had grown, after all, very strong. Her patients were just "cases" for the time being, like any others. Erskine, although only half conscious, was in considerable pain. He required the most of her active attention. But on Killigrew, who lay for the most part very still, she had to keep an even more trying watch, for his strength stood at zero. She had to be constantly alert for every flicker of the pulse, every variation of temperature. Both patients were feverish; now and then they muttered incoherent words, queer scraps of reminiscence, words of command, tags of technical instruction. Erskine, a machine-gun expert, babbled about "Emma Gee." Beatrice had picked up enough campaigning slang to know that the young man's thoughts had not lightly turned to thoughts of love, but were running on his chosen weapon. She looked at him with a whimsical interest. War had spared his good looks. He was pinched and worn, but the same gallant boy she had known in happier times. That was something to be thankful for. But Killigrew? She wondered what those bandages concealed. Auntie Matron had merely said "shrapnel in the head." That might mean hopeless disfigurement. But this would never do. She was forgetting the strictly impersonal. At that moment Erskine grew very restless, and Beatrice became merely the nurse again.

But during that first vigil her memory was often curiously stirred. Had ever nurse, she wondered, a stranger experience? What would happen when they returned to full consciousness? At ordinary times she paid small heed to the inconsequences of fevered men, but this was different. She caught herself listening for — what? Something she hardly cared to acknowledge to herself. She had no right to encourage such thoughts. That episode was dead and buried, she hoped. But a woman likes to be remembered, even where she has been unable to give more than friendship. Poor boys, her decision had been hard on them both. The episode in question would not be stilled. She lived through it again as she sat between the two cots, as the small hours became less small. Beatrice recalled the eves of Killigrew's and Erskine's departure, the one in August, 1914, the other six months later. Each had asked the same question; to each she had to give the same answer. They had been friends out of the common, but beyond that she had never dreamed of going, except, perhaps—— But no, when it came to the actual test, her heart had bidden her say "No." And now here they were, wrecked, broken, suffering, brought back to her, their lives in great measure in her hands. Oh, the whirligig of this extraordinary time!

They had taken her answer like the men they were. The three of them were of the modern world, modern. The present age is not one of ceremonious love-speeches. Her soldier boys had asked a plain, almost abrupt question, and got a plain answer. She recalled Killigrew's "Sorry, old girl," and his very English concealment of emotion. Her Scot, the harder hit of the two, had disguised his feelings less perfectly, but his look betrayed him more than his tongue. Yet he had allowed himself just a shade more sentiment in his acceptance of defeat. "So that dream ends, Bee." Yes, he was the more imaginative person. He had been new to soldiering, a recruit from the University. Killigrew was of the Old Army. But both took her answer very well—no heroics, a neat changing of the subject, and unbroken friendship. Upstairs in her desk Beatrice had many letters from the Front. Many pleasant epistles from her had cheered the dug-out and the billet in Flanders during that first weary winter and after. In the circumstances her reflections to-night were perhaps pardonable.

Before her first spell of duty ended, Beatrice knew that the situation she had to face would require all her tact. Neither of her patients had forgotten. Once or twice Killigrew's fevered dream had run parallel with his unknown nurse's thoughts. She started to hear him murmur, "Sorry, old girl, sorry," and once Erskine had spoken her name. For a moment she fancied he had regained full consciousness, but a glance undeceived her. She braced herself to put the whole affair out of her mind, for she feared psychic suggestion and consequent harm. Her effort of will succeeded. She turned her thoughts in another direction, and exerted a certain hypnotic power which she had discovered she possessed, and often used with excellent effect on restless and suffering men. It meant the transference of part of their pain to her own body, but that was a small matter. She had her reward in their greater ease.

Towards morning she fancied she saw a slight improvement. The M.O., who had been anxious about the two centurions when they were admitted, looked in very early.

"Not worse," he said; "perhaps a little better."

Beatrice pointed to Captain Erskine's arm. "Will it mend?" she asked.

The M.O. shrugged his shoulders.

"Must you——?"

"I can't say. Perhaps. We'll see. Hope not."

She turned to the other cot. The doctor signed to her to remove Killigrew's head dressings. Beatrice had never before felt so tempted to disobey orders—never had she dreaded fuller knowledge of any case. Best, however, to know the worst and get it over. She screwed her courage to the sticking place, and was glad to find that her fingers did not tremble.

"Poor chap!" said Medicus under his breath. "Yes, that'll do, Nurse. Fix him up again."

Beatrice bit her lip and went on with her task. "What about the remaining eye?" she whispered, following the doctor to the door.

"There's a chance for it—just. Go on as you're doing. I'll come along again soon."

Beatrice knew the worst now. She came back and sat down between the cots, feeling a little faint and very tired. She had thought she was past being moved even by the ghastliest wreckage of war, but this was a special case. And John had been—well, he had been what he would never be again, that was only too clear. Oh, the hideous iniquity of it all, the foul blasphemy against the temple of the Holy Ghost, the goodly form of humanity thus desecrated!

She was recalled to duty by a restless movement of the sufferer. She placed one hand on the swathed head, and willed him back to quietness. Poor boy, poor boy! Then Erskine stirred and moaned. She stretched out her other hand and laid it on his uninjured one, which he had flung out upon the coverlet. And as the grey London dawn crept in, Beatrice sat, Madonna-like, touching with healing hands the two men, who lay unconscious of her ministrations. For a long time she did not move; then as something like easy sleep fell upon the patients, and she was free to think her own thoughts, the odd pathetic humour of the situation held her in suspense between a smile and a tear. A line of Lewis Carroll's, whimsically altered, gave the victory for a moment to the smile. "I could not do with more than two, to give a hand to each." It was what they had both wanted exclusively, and now they had it equally and impartially, and were none the wiser. It made it a little more absurd that they should be in her room, and that she should be set in authority over these two warriors. As they grew stronger—*if* they grew stronger—she would require all her authority. But that was some distance ahead. A stern fight lay before all three.

The fight lasted many days and nights. Erskine, at first the most hopeful case, had the toughest struggle. Very reluctantly the authorities pronounced the arm past cure, and used the knife. Thereafter the patient began to mend. By that time Beatrice was on day duty. One morning, on coming in, she saw that Erskine, although pitifully weak still, had returned to full consciousness. She knew the look of the man who is trying to take in his surroundings and link up continuity of thought. He was muddled and puzzled. He looked at Beatrice uncertainly, and murmured something in a very faint voice about a clean knock-out and a bally Boche with a stick-bomb. He added that these were very pretty flowers on the table, but he thought he had done in the Boche all right.

"You keep quiet and drink this, and never mind the Boche. Go to sleep now, like a good boy."

Erskine did as he was bid. Beatrice turned to the other case. Killigrew was still in darkness, but he had been conscious for several days. His general condition had improved beyond expectation.

"Good morning, nurse. I suppose it's morning." He had grown very acute in noting changes of attendant. "Oh, yes, I'm all right! Going strong. When do you mean to take these beastly rags off my eyes, and let me get a blink of daylight?"

"Oh, one day soon! All in good time."

"You always say that. I say, I'm hearing a little better to-day. Do you know, your voice puzzles me. Sounds familiar, somehow, but I can't place it."

"Oh, nonsense! Now, don't talk. You'll wake my other patient."

"How is he—conscious yet?" Killigrew asked in a loud whisper.

"Yes, yes. But do keep quiet, Captain Killigrew."

"One word. Just struck me, I've never asked his name yet. Queer, how one forgets things in this mix-up."

"He's Captain Erskine, Black Watch."

"Great Scot! Where was he pipped?"

"Not another word, or I won't read to you this afternoon."

There was silence for an hour in the ward.

She turned and laid a finger on her lip.

"My name's Nurse," she whispered; "you're still dreaming. Talking's forbidden. Go to sleep again."



"But her blind man was awake again, if he had ever been asleep."

Killigrew fell asleep, or, at least, seemed to sleep.

Beatrice went on with routine work, and then arranged some fresh flowers. She was interrupted by Erskine's voice.

"Bee, is it really you, or am I still dreaming?"

He obeyed, but his eyes told her that he knew. He held out his feeble left hand.

Beatrice took it for a moment. "That's all right, D.E. Now, no noise. Everything depends on your doing exactly as I bid you. Sleep."

He smiled and closed his eyes. Beatrice

used the gentle mysterious persuasion of her will, and the patient slept.

But her blind man was awake again, if he had ever been asleep.

"I know now," he exclaimed—"I've got it! The other chap gave you away. Dash these bandages! I *will* have a look at you, back the use of your eyes"—oh, great Heavens, he didn't know yet the mockery of her words!—"you must be content with the darkness for a bit."

He came to order and lay still.

"Will it be very long?" he asked presently, "before I can see?"



"'I *will* have a look at you, Bee, dear old girl!'"

Bee, dear old girl!" He put up one hand and made to tear off the dressings.

Beatrice took action. It did not require much strength to bring her patient to order.

"Look here, if you try that again, Jack, I'll report you as insubordinate to the M.O. Don't be a silly boy. If you want to get

"That all depends on how you behave. Here's your beef-tea. And really you must keep still, or we'll have that thermometer up again to-night."

So the fight went on, always with a little improvement, until at last the two men were strong enough to talk to each other. One

day Erskine, who was able to sit up occasionally in a chair, scrawled a pitiful little note with his left hand. "Must go back to pot-hooks, Nurse," he said, with a wry smile, holding out the paper to Beatrice. She took it and read—

"How about Killigrew's eyesight?"

Beatrice took the pencil and wrote: "Better hopes of the remaining eye."

Erskine read and scrawled again: "Disfigured?"

Beatrice wrote: "Yes, terribly, but modern surgery can do wonders. Cheero!"

"I'm a lucky dog," Erskine remarked.

"What's that you say, Erskine?" his neighbour asked. "Has Nurse been giving you something particularly nasty, that you're so thankful?"

"Yes, she gave me a horrid prescription just now, but there was a little bit of sugar for the bird at the end."

"She's an awful tyrant."

"Worse than the Kaiser. Rum go, our being delivered into her hands like this."

"Rather have got into friend Boche's, wouldn't you, Killers?"

"Oh, a thousand times. We haven't a life."

"You're a couple of ungrateful pigs. I'll chuck you out if you cheek me like this! And by the by, Jack, I've some good news for you. You're going to be shunted for a bit."

"Out of your clutches?"

"Oh, no, not exactly, nothing so pleasant. But you're going into a perfectly dark room, and the eye bandages are coming off gradually."

"Glory be! But it'll be precious stale in the dark."

"It's only next door, and this man, now that he gets up a little every day, will be allowed in to amuse you sometimes with his intellectual conversation. Incidently, *I* may drop in now and then, seeing you don't require constant looking after any longer, you deplorable infants."

"Jove! I am bucked!" Killigrew exclaimed. "It will be ripping to be rid of these bandages at last! How long will it be before I get out of the dark altogether?"

"Oh, not very long, I hope."

"This right eye feels queerish still—I suppose it got the worse bash—but I'm sure the other's all right. I've next to no pain in it now. These bandages must be jolly efficient. They don't let in a glimpse of light. How do you manage it?"

"We know our job, or I hope we do."

"You must. I've often wondered how you did it. You know, playing blind man's buff, one always has a sense of light, but this is complete blindfold."

Beatrice and Erskine looked at Killigrew with pity and apprehension. He was getting on to dangerous ground. His nurse did not want any more of this. Any moment the patient might ask himself a question which providentially had not yet occurred to him. She made haste to change the subject.

But a few days later Beatrice found herself up against the hard fact. By that time she knew the oculist's verdict. In some ways it was best.

"When are you going to open the blinds," Killigrew asked, "and give me the chance of a look at you? I'm sick of eternal darkness!"

"You must have patience."

"I've had lots, I think. I say," he continued, with a strange catch in his voice, "I say, Beatrice—oh, my God, does this mean—tell me—am I blind outright—for always?"

It had come, then. Beatrice had permission, if Killigrew asked the direct question, to break it to him. She fought down a choking in her throat and commanded her voice as well as she could.

"Jack, old boy, it's rough luck on you, but your eyes will never be quite the same. You may in time see with one, but the other is useless."

"Is it gone—destroyed—not there any longer, I mean?"

"Since you ask, it's no use deceiving you."

Killigrew lay back in his chair and kept silence for what seemed an age. Then he spoke.

"Am I utterly hideous?"

"That's not a thing to think about. Surgery can work miracles——" She stopped, fearing she had blundered.

"You mean, only a miracle can make me presentable."

"No, no! I was very clumsy to say that." She touched his hand. "Forgive me! A good deal less than a miracle will meet the case. But here's a visitor."

Erskine came in slowly. "Hullo, old man, how goes it?" he asked, as he sat down.

"Ah, glad to see you, figuratively speaking. By the by, old man, the Tyrant has just knocked me in the wind. She says I'm a bat, or thereabouts, for my natural. In time I'll get accustomed to the idea, I suppose, so there's no use grousing. What's

your news? Read the papers to-day? How's the Hun going?"

Beatrice, afraid to trust herself longer in that overcharged atmosphere, left her two centurions alone. Oh, he was splendid! Turning it off with a joke! A very gallant gentleman indeed. She wanted to be alone. She had a moment to spare. In her little top room she let her emotion go, and, almost cheerful, came down again to duty.

But Beatrice was restless in these days. Since Fate had thrust Erskine and Killigrew back into her life, she had lost her peace of mind. Hitherto her work had been everything; her splendid youth and vigour had scorned fatigue and borne her through the hardest hours with joyous exhilaration. But now she found herself, like St. Paul, "in a strait betwixt two." In the earlier days, before the War had seemed anything but an adventurous incident of perhaps no very long duration, she had still skimmed the surface of life, sufficient to herself, pleased with the game of modern young womanhood, heart-whole, and jealous of freedom. Life held endless possibilities; Beatrice was in no hurry to form closer ties. These two men, who had offered her a glimpse down a different vista, had been good friends, but anything deeper lay quite beyond her horizon. She had never paused to analyse her feelings towards them. Impulse had bidden her say "No." There she left it. But that was now all changed. Thrown upon her in their helplessness, in their gallant acceptance of calamity, they had come in these last weeks to be the centre of her world. The curious intimacy of this present relation had evoked a new range of emotion, against which even professional barriers were not armour of proof. Not that her two captains had ever given the least hint that they recalled one crucial incident. But it was present continually to the minds of all the three, and Beatrice, being a woman, could not but foresee that the future might once more confront her with a question which would not be so easily answered as it had been at the first time of asking. Formerly, if she had made any choice, she fancied the lot might have fallen upon Erskine. Now she was not so sure. Killigrew's greater affliction, his patience, and his heroic acceptance of his fate, had touched her to fine issues. She must leave it. She almost hated herself for these insurgent forecasts of a problem more or less remote, but her instinct refused to be quelled. And it would be well not to be caught unawares. She wondered sometimes if either man had any inkling that the other had once put his fortune to the touch, with her for arbiter. Their triangular friendship in the dancing days of peace had been no secret to their immediate set. But with that set her Aunt Bovingdon had held little traffic, otherwise this situation might never have arisen. That would, perhaps, have been better. Yet Beatrice could not regret it.

Meanwhile, in the darkened room, the two men, left alone, buried their trouble in cheery small talk. Once only Killigrew alluded to his misfortunes. "I suppose I must train Binkie to lead me about now," he said, forcing a laugh.

"By the by, how is that intelligent little hound?" Erskine asked, parrying the suggestion.

"Going strong when I heard last. Wish I could have him here. Never mind, I'll soon be going home. The Tyrant says a month may see us out of this."

"Only a month?"

"Why 'only'?"

"Well, you know——"

"Exactly. One gets accustomed to routine; we're creatures of habit, and there were compensations. I say, Erskine, old chap, tell me, is the Tyrant as pretty as ever?"

"Prettier, I think."

"Her work hasn't hurt her?"

"Anything but. The butterfly is an angel now."

"I know that quite as well as you. Jove, how she's pulled me through! How does she look in her cap and apron?"

"Ripping!"

"I was sure of it. Hope I'll get some kind of a look at her yet, however dim. But, even as it is, I seem to be able to see her—yes, actually. They say blind men get a sort of sixth sense. I'm finding that out already. Perhaps it's not a very good sign."

"Oh, that'll be all right, no fear."

"I'm not so sure. However, I must make the best of it. The world's not at an end for fellows like me, thanks to Sir Arthur. He'll find me a job. The worst is, we'll not get another smack at the Hun."

"That's the rotten part of it. However, no use grousing. By the by, the doc. told me a screaming story this morning. That was really my chief end in crawling in just now."

"Fire away, then."

Erskine fired away, and the consequences brought the Tyrant to the door.

"If you excite my patient like this, Captain

Erskine, you'll please go back to your own room."

"Aren't you glad to see us cheerful, Nurse?"

"You can be cheerful without being rowdy."

"Very well. We haven't much of a life with her, have we, Kill?"

"Not half! Still, we're very forgiving. We'll tell you the story, if you stay."

"Haven't a moment. Sorry."

"Do you know, Erskine," Killigrew remarked, as Beatrice closed the door, "I used to be fiendishly jealous of you. I once thought you were to have it all your own way with Mistress Bee."

"Confidence for confidence, old man. I feared the same with you."

"Well, you need have no fear now. I'm out of all that. But you're still pretty presentable, I believe."

"A one-armed wreck of an old soldier! No great shakes. Anyhow, it's all UP. And as confessions are going, I may as well tell you that I tried my luck there and found it was no go."

"Then we're quits. I tried to play the like, and foozled my shot, too."

"How did you feel when you woke up here, and found whose thumb you were under?"

"After the first queerness wore off, I thought I'd taken a short cut to heaven."

"Same here."

"It's the most I'll have of it. My day's done."

"Mine, too. All the same, heaven's been just a wee bit like the grapes of Tantalus, to have her always beside one, to be dependent on her as we have been these weeks, and yet it was a lucky turn, worth the disagreeables and so forth of the business. There's something in the Platonic, after all."

"It's all I can look for now, but you're still in the running. An arm, more or less, is nothing."

"But I'd never——"

"Why not? If you're still game to try your luck again, take the advice of a disinterested and not unobservant friend. Blind beggar though I am, I've got ears. She has lately had a note in her voice when she spoke to you that she hadn't for me, sweet as she has been."

"That's all my eye, dear old chap. I've thought the very same, the other way about."

"We'd better have pistols for two and coffee for one, then, as soon as your peepers improve."

"Don't be an ass! I've retired, utterly and finally. Besides, my peepers, or what's left of them, are never likely to be up to much, if anything."

"I'm not so sure. But even if you insist on being out of it, I'd never have the cheek to offer my remnant, even if she'd have me, which isn't likely."

"I beg to differ, with all respect. Remember, I claim keener intuitions—more insight, as it were, for the very reason that I've less actual vision."

"Come to that, we both thought the very same thing, you remember. We can't both be right; we might both be wrong."

"Would you be sorry if I were wrong, Erskine?"

"That's rather a facer. But honestly, yes, of course. However, the thing's not practical politics. This academic discussion had better end."

"Perhaps, but I repeat my advice. If you've a chance, remember she'll never give you the least encouragement consciously. Her professional reserve is perfect, almost comic, in some ways. And two good friends of mine, who might be happy together, will go lonely to the end of their days if one is obstinate. Go in and win, old man."

"Only on one condition—that you play for your own hand, too."

"I? Great Heavens, Erskine, no; it's not to be thought of! It's different with you. But I begin to realise that I must be hideous, and that surgery can only patch me, at the best. I must face the facts. I'm down and out."

"There we leave it, then. Perhaps it's better so. She doesn't think about us, I suppose, except as a pair of interesting cases, a little more interesting, perhaps, because of ancient history. We're a pair of bumptious lunatics and crocks, old boy. If we were our normal selves, we'd never have got entangled in this discussion."

"You're right so far. Still, I'd have liked you to pull it off, for I know well enough how the land lies with you, at any rate. Why should you hold back for me, a thing with no ghost of a chance? You might humour me, at least. Or will you consent to a duel?"

"A duel?"

"Yes; a very unwarlike affair, but all I'm up to. Beatrice will be coming in soon. Whoever she speaks to first, tries his luck."

"That's too thin, my subtle friend. You know she'll order me off at once to my afternoon rest. It's betting on a dead cert."

"Well, she'll be bringing our beef-tea. Whoever she gives the first cup to——"

"That will do."

"But one other condition. If I win the duel, you won't hold me to it, but consider me already chucked, and go ahead yourself."

"No, your second condition comes too late. I'd accepted the deal. It's either on or off altogether."

"Then Heaven send you win! I'd never have the face—— Shut up! Here she comes."

Beatrice entered with a tray. She set it down, opened the curtains ever so little, just enough to see what she was about, and then, taking up a cup in each hand, held them out, saying: "Here, you two gossips, drink this and then get ready for your nap."

It was a dead heat. The duel had not come off.

"Why do you laugh?" she asked.

"We had a small bet about who you would give the first cup to, and we've both lost, you see."

"Serve you right! You'll pay me the stakes for the Red Cross, please."

They had no opportunity of discussing the *impasse*, for Beatrice marched Erskine off as soon as he had drunk his beef-tea. Both men lay considering their odd conversation, viewing it from different angles with different emotions. Killigrew's view was the more detached. He considered himself merely a spectator—he laughed at the word—but Erskine was disturbed. His companion's whimsical mood had roused a half-dormant passion to new fire. What if Killigrew's instinct were right? It was hardly to be believed. It meant a new world, a new life, if he were to try and not fail.

During the weeks that remained to them neither renewed the discussion. It had been born of a moment of singular confidence, helped by the inward and outward darkness in which they sat. For the last week Killigrew was back in his old quarters. He need stay no longer in utter gloom. And he was very hopeful, for he could just distinguish day from night.

It was Killigrew who broke the silence of the last night but one before their departure. They were alone, for they required night nursing no longer.

"Erskine, are you asleep?"

"No. Want anything?"

"Remember our duel?"

"Slightly. Awful rot! What of it?"

"You said to Bee we'd both lost the bet, as we called it, to her. Well, to-day she said to me: 'By the by, I've been thinking about that absurd bet of yours. Erskine said you'd both lost. Hadn't you really both won?'"

"By Jove, perhaps we had, looking at it that way! I suppose the duel being off made me think the bet was lost. It's a fine point."

"It's more than that. It lays us both under an obligation. What was the winner to do?"

"I see. Then you've come round. You're a sportsman."

"I accept the decree of Fate. We'll start level and tempt Fortune for the last time. The odds are on you, old man."

"I question that. Good night!"

So they slept on it.

Beatrice lived through those last days in a conflict of emotions. She blamed herself for growing too much attached to her two boys, as she called them. She did not want to lose them. It is an experience common to nurses; she had known it before, but never so keenly, for this tragi-comedy was unlike all others. She found herself weighing her feelings. Had Erskine come alone—well, there was no knowing what might have happened. He was still very good to look at, and pure gold. But now Jack Killigrew, with his heavier burden, his eternal cheerfulness, had intervened. She believed that, if such a thing could come to pass, she could find no greater happiness than lightening his burden to the end, for better or worse. But these were all empty, perhaps rather unmaidenly dreams, to be resisted or forgotten. The experience remained a possession for ever. With that she must be content.

Then in the last hours two bombs broke at her feet. The first was Jack's—a queerly-scrawled note of a word or two, with the lines mixed up in places. Before she could answer it she received the other, the left-handed one, almost equally grotesque and pitiful. Her heart was pulled this way and that. Luckily, this was her afternoon off. She went for a walk in the Park, and stayed out till the very limit of her time, going she hardly knew whither, searching her heart. Good Heavens, now that it had come to a choice, David Erskine was more to her than she had realised. It might seem impossible, outrageous, but she loved them both, each in a different way. Could she bear to let one suffer by the other's victory? She was tempted—tempted almost beyond her strength. So this was what people call love—a thing of torment, of sacrifice, as lacerating, in its degree, as war, which had

taken such cruel toll of her two centurions. Oh, David, Jack—but David, David!

Gradually she saw her way clear. Again, as when she took up her present life, Beatrice counted the cost—it was not light—and took her decision, believing she had found the right way.

"Old man," Erskine began again that night, when they were alone again, "you see, I was right."

"It's the other way about, isn't it? Are you dazed with happiness? I was just going to crow over my true intuitions. None can see like the single-eyed."

"What?"

"Of course she did the right thing. I *am* glad, old chap. Congrats!"

"We seem to be badly mixed up. Is it a return of shell-shock? Let's straighten things out. To be plain, I'm not IT. Do you mean that neither of us——"

"Neither."

Erskine raised himself awkwardly, reached over his left hand, and took hold of Killigrew's right.

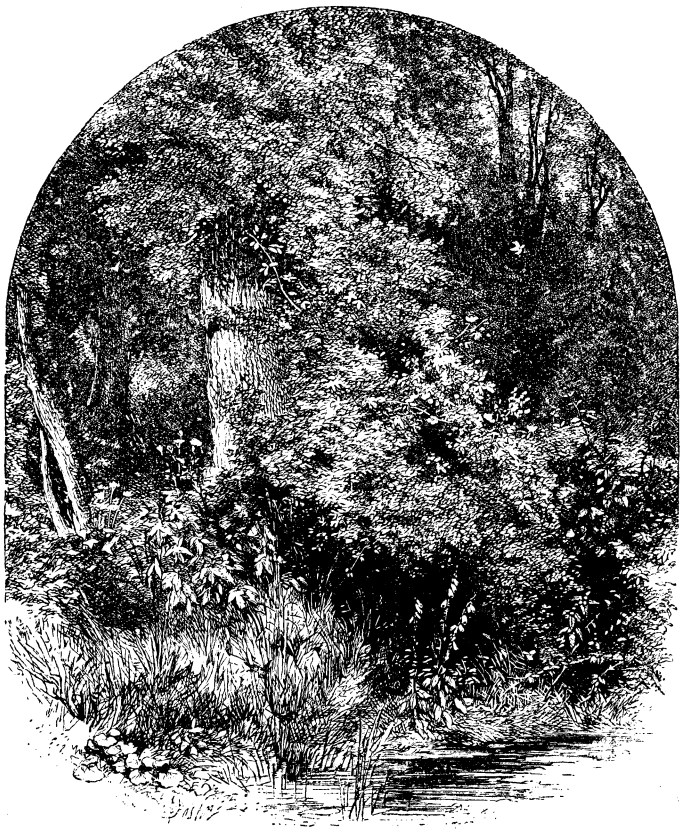
"Sorry, old pal; I'd set my heart on it."

"Sorry, old man, so had I. I thought, for you, it was possible."

"But it wasn't. Good night!"

"Good night!"

Beatrice, on duty in Ward A, was seeking relief from herself in the anxieties of a new and very difficult, but entirely impersonal, case.



A WILDERNESS OF LEAVES.

BY BIRKET FOSTER.



CITY LADS WEEDING FLAX DURING THEIR HOLIDAY IN THE COUNTRY.

BOY LABOUR ON THE LAND IN WAR-TIME

By CHARLES J. L. CLARKE

Photographs by Clarke & Hyde

CONSIDERABLE success has already attended the efforts of the Ministry of National Service in organising the large army of boys which has been selected and placed on work on the land to help the agriculturalists in their War-time troubles.

The numbers are especially satisfactory when we consider that the approximate physical capabilities of each individual boy have been carefully studied, so that only those who are presumably possessed of sufficient strength to do work of real service on the land are enrolled in the legions of the boy war workers. This year the combined efforts of over 30,000 boys have been marshalled to help in farming operations, and particularly in harvesting the various crops.

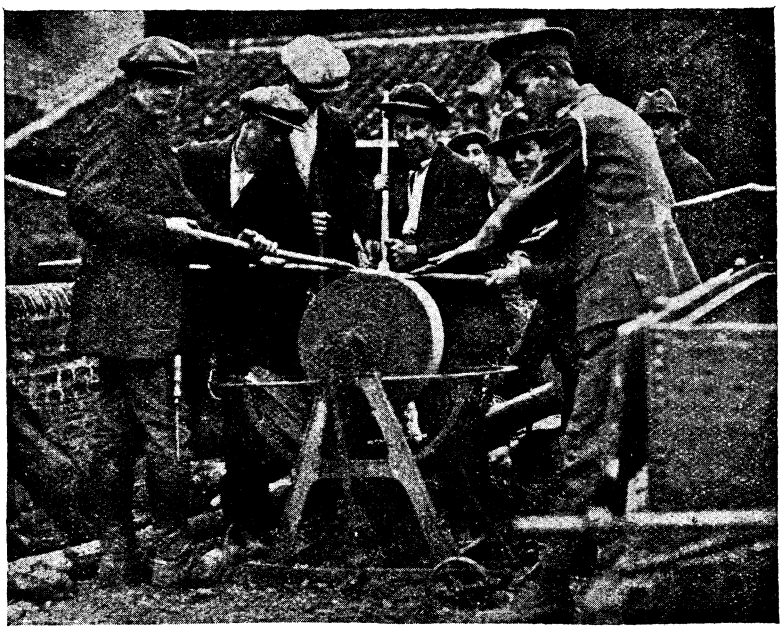
Another point which is also a matter for considerable satisfaction is that large though the numbers utilised this year are, the demand exceeded the supply, owing to the satisfactory work accomplished by the earlier bands of boys this year, and to the record left behind by the comparatively small number which took the field last year.

In future years we may look to increased numbers of boys spending their summer vacation in land work and harvesting, because the scheme is one of those that suits both parties to it. The farmers want the labour, and a very large majority of the boys come back with tales of the jolliest holiday they have enjoyed, a holiday on which the work accomplished in no way detracts from the satisfaction of mind and improvement in health which would be experienced from the old-time holiday. Although the camp commandants make arrangements for medical attention by the doctors in each locality, the attention required has been very small, and from among the first thousand who went down to weed the flax for the Flax Department of the Board of Agriculture no serious case of illness or injury was reported.



LEARNING THE USE OF VARIOUS IMPLEMENTS.

The scenes at a selection depôt are full of human interest, and if we take the methods and treatment of the applicants by the various scoutmasters, schoolmasters, and others who have helped to enrol the boys all over the country as somewhat similar to those employed by Captain Elgee, who selected the boy flax workers from the City of London, it will be seen that the utmost care is exercised in getting the right kind of boy for the work. The bulk of the boy workers are in batches from public and secondary schools and Scout organisations under their own teachers and masters, but a considerable number apply, generally with a pal or pals with whom they wish to work, and the efforts of the boys to get every member of their party enrolled are amusing and somewhat pathetic at times. The more weakly ones, who, so far as one can judge, would not be capable of sustaining the physical effort demanded, are considerately weeded out. "We must try to take you next year, my boy," says the kindly Captain; "I really don't think you would be able to stick it yet." "Oh, he's very strong," puts in one of his pals. "He is quite as strong as me, although he don't look it," apologetically continues his advocate. But these little recommendations generally fail to stir the Captain from his judgment. "Whom are you going with, then, my lad?" asks the Captain, as a



SHARPENING IMPLEMENTS.



LAYING FAGGOTS FOR RICK FOUNDATIONS.

single applicant presents himself. "My chum can't get here until after five, sir," says the inquirer. "Will you be open then?" "Oh, yes!" And off darts the prospective young land worker to bring along his friend for inspection. "Are you doing this to help your country?" the Captain asks another applicant. "Yes, sir," the boy responds. "Not because you want a jolly holiday?" slyly suggests the Captain. "Well, yes, sir," the prospective land worker admits. "Ah," says the Captain, "I thought so. A little of each, eh? All right, then." And another stout lad is booked to help his health and help his country at the same time.

The working holiday of the boy on the land is arranged with a corresponding amount of care and forethought.

As far as possible the demand for boys is met locally, but large contingents are transported from the centres to districts where the labour is required. Some four thousand will be employed in raising the



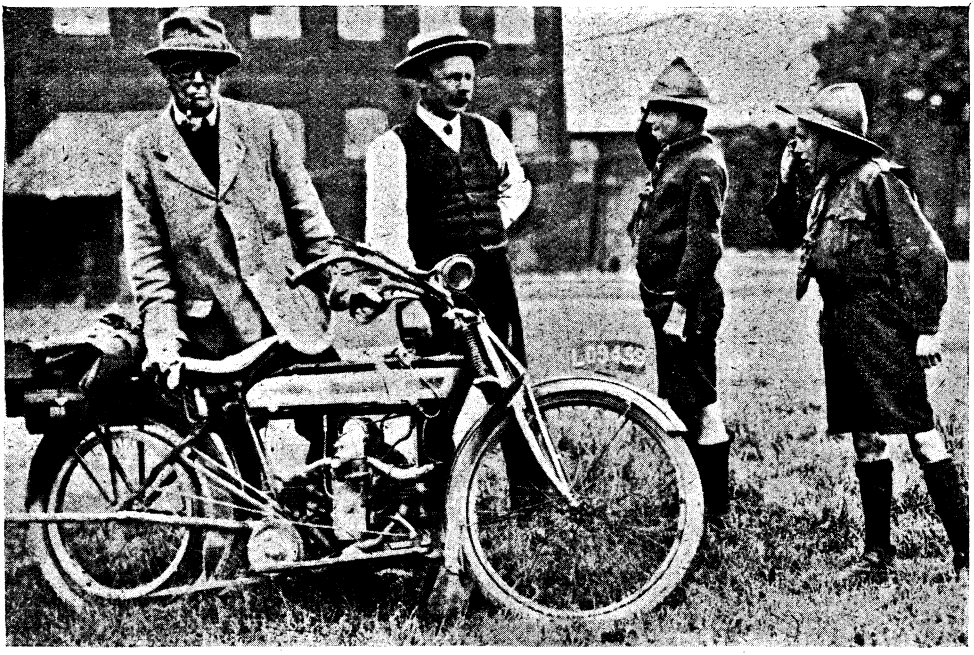
HANDLING STRAW IN THE FARMYARD.



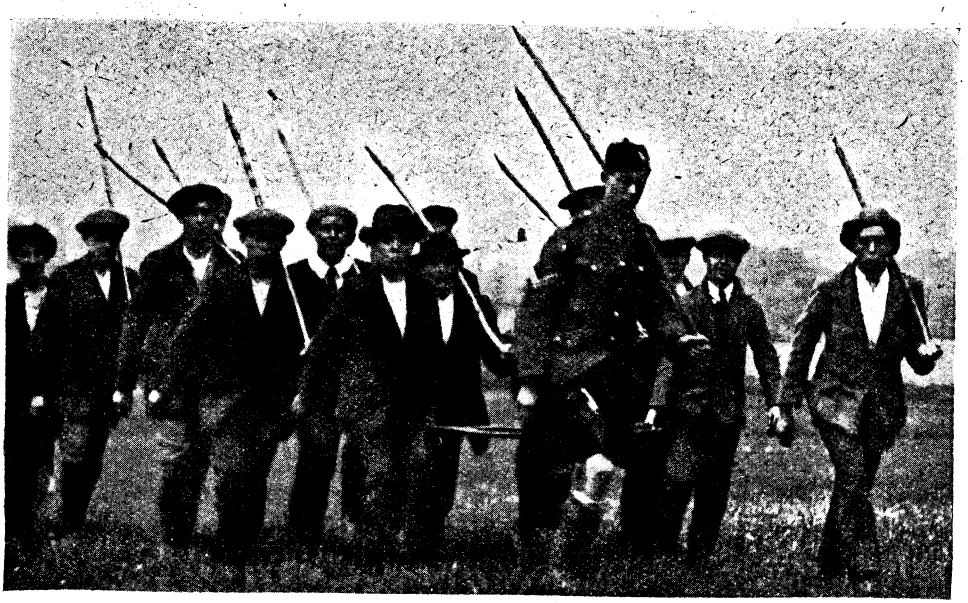
WEEDING.

potato harvest in the counties where the largest quantity of these important items in our present food supplies is grown. Hay, corn, fruit, flax, and other things have to be harvested, and demand their share of attention from the boys in various localities to which the workers are sent, often in special trains.

Accommodation is provided in canvas camps for not less than twenty-five boys, and squads are billeted in empty houses, schools, farm buildings, etc. Some of the large schools take charge of a district, providing squads at surrounding places where the boys are required, each centre



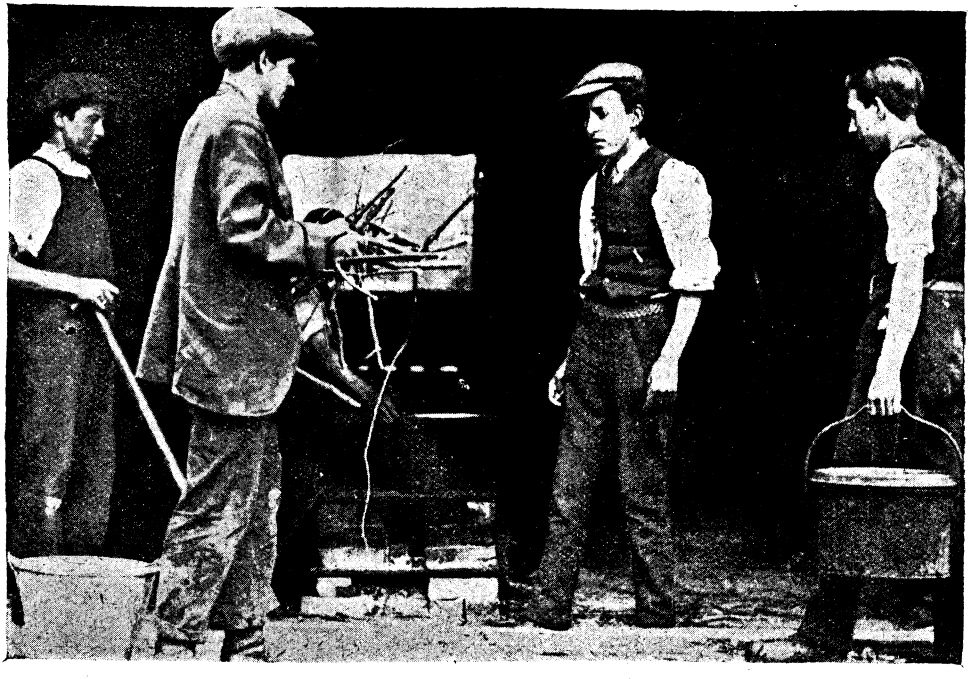
FIELD ORDERS: SCOUTS TAKING INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE WORKERS ON THE LAND.



MARCHING TO BILLETS AFTER A DAY'S WEEDING.

being under due supervision, the masters or persons in charge being accommodated at the centre where their respective squad is working.

The details attending the care of this large army of boy workers have enlisted the help of various departments. The War Office places an officer in charge of all arrangements for harvest camps within the area of each command. As far as they are available, the military authorities supply canvas tents and equipment for camps, and release for a camp of fifty a quartermaster-sergeant, a cook, and two orderlies, and for larger or smaller camps in proportion. The War Office also arranges, where camps are



COOKS PREPARING THE EVENING MEAL.

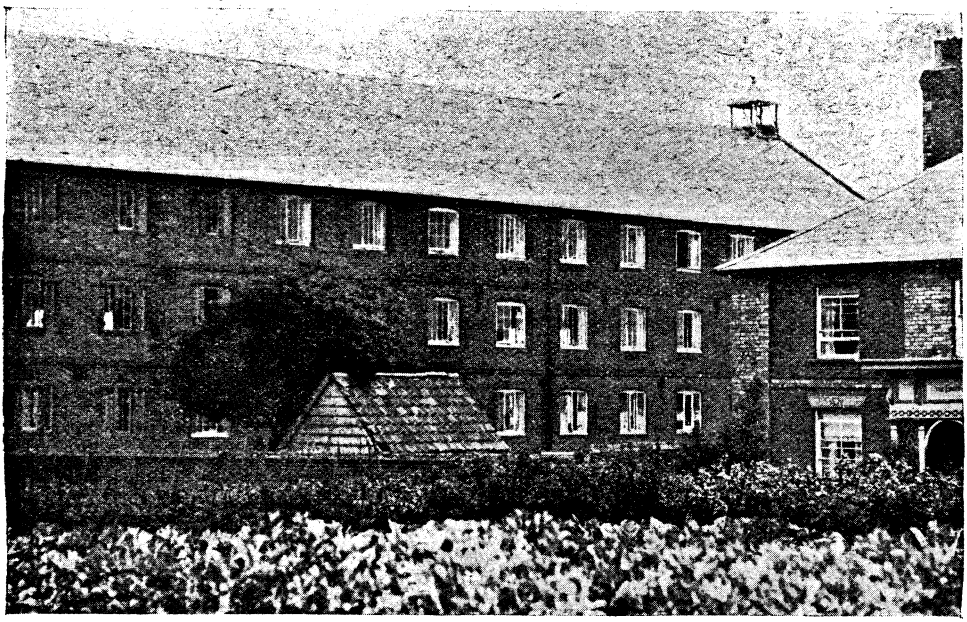
accessible to Army Service Corps depôts, to issue certain rations from Army stocks, on repayment.

The minimum age for the average volunteers is sixteen years, although exceptionally strong boys may be accepted from fourteen years upwards, and the service is for a minimum of three weeks, exclusive of days spent in travelling.

The hours of work on potato lifting and similar work are six to eight hours a day; on clearing land and similar work, seven to eight hours a day; and on general harvest work, eight to ten hours a day, and a minimum wage of fourpence per hour is paid by the farmer to the commandant and pooled for expenses of catering. The cost of railway travelling is covered by a grant from the Ministry of National Service, when necessary, and a maximum of five shillings per head, if necessary, to meet any deficit which may arise on schoolboy camps and squads.

Work is, of course, the primary duty of the boy on the land, and his capacity for "doing things" has proved so great that the demand for more boys is continual.

If not strenuous, the labour is certainly considerable, but there is ample time for such amusements as can be had in the country. Cricket matches, concerts, and whist drives are arranged, and sometimes a visit to a travelling circus, and when a recreation-room with a piano in it is available, it is usually well patronised by the boys in the evenings. But what is most important, from the growing boy's point of view, is that the food is abundant and good, and one can imagine the satisfaction with which the young land volunteer reads at the foot of the week's feeding arrangements that he may have as much porridge, bread, tea, cocoa, potatoes, pudding, roly-poly, rice, jam, and vegetables as he wishes, when they are on the day's menu. Those who know what a real camp appetite is like can well consider that this interesting footnote removes a whole string of the worries of anticipation.



ONE OF THE LARGE BUILDINGS WHERE SOME OF THE CITY FLAX WEEDERS STOPPED.

The bulk of the farmers take a very friendly interest in the young workers, and the general opinion of the youngsters is that their own particular farmer is "a sound old boy."

I recently visited one of the camps, and it would be difficult to imagine a happier lot of young fellows. Faces were sunburnt, and spirits were as high as a contented holidaymaker's could well be. The morning's spell of work was followed by a hedgerow lunch, with all the romantic accompaniments of wood fires and steaming dixies, and a quiet rest in the shade afterwards left no laggards when the time for resuming work came round.

After the afternoon's work they left for

their billets, making the country lanes ring to merry marching songs which kept time to a quick-step, which showed that the boys on the land were far from tired; and the step was no slower because of the knowledge that a substantial hot dinner, with, at any rate, some of those unlimited items included in it, awaited them at their camp, where the Army men had been occupied in preparing for their return.

Even junior scouts and "cubs" can do something to help our food production by attacking the ever-increasing armies of insect pests, butterflies, and other destructive creatures which prey upon the products of the land, although their efforts must necessarily be restricted to their own districts, and their holidays to out and home in the day.

Probably the scheme for working holidays on the land for sturdy, healthy boys will outlast the War, now that the lines on which their services can be utilised have been thoroughly well organised.

A LYRIC FROM THE LINE.

By LIEUTENANT GEOFFREY FYSON.

THE moonlight of forgotten seas
Dwells in your eyes, and on your tongue
The honey of a thousand bees
And all the sorrows of all song.
You are the ending of all these,
The world grew old to make you young.

The snows on high Olympus' gate,
For countless centuries at rest,
Melted, and lie inviolate
On the white wonder of your breast.
And o'er your cheeks were poured by Fate
Soft sunsets, stolen from the west.

Thus are you composite! The whole
Radiant with melodies! Were riven
The earth, the sky, the water's roll
To make you so. Nor know I even
The body from its uncompass'd soul,
Nor yet yourself from those in Heaven.

The gods, of whose company you are,
Hold safe your dear swift feet, and bless
Your pathway through each wandering year,
Grant you a light, that grows not less,
To go before you as a star
And lead you in your loveliness.

* * * * *

The moonlight of forgotten seas
Dwells in your eyes, and on your tongue
The honey of a thousand bees
And all the sorrows of all song.
You are the ending of all these,
The world grew old—to make you young.

ON THE FLOOD-TIDE

By HAROLD BINDLOSS

Illustrated by Wal Paget

THE night was frosty, and Mrs. Nixon and her step-daughter were cold and tired when they drove through a belt of mist that crawled across the marsh. As they climbed the low rise at Dryholm, the wild cry of a curlew came out of the dark, and in the distance they heard the murmur of the sea. It was past low water, and the tide would soon sweep across the broad expanse of sands.

In spite of their relationship, Mrs. Nixon and Alice were good friends, and sometimes accomplices, for Nixon was hard to live with when he took liquor. He had other faults, but he was fond of his children. Mrs. Nixon had two, and, although she had hardly hoped for this, the little girls loved Alice. She ought to have seen the Hallows' lights from the top of Dryholm knowe, but all was dark on the low marsh, and she urged the pony. Hallows Farm was small and poor, the women had no help, and when they went to market, Nixon took care of the children. It. however, looked as if there was nobody in the house, and Mrs. Nixon knew her husband had not gone to Dryholm. Strachan and he were neighbours, but they had not spoken for twenty years.

She lighted a fire in the cold, flagged kitchen while Alice stabled the pony, and, as the light spread, she saw a note on the table.

"I'm takin' bairns to their granny's," the loosely-written message ran.

When the kettle was boiling, Alice came in, and Mrs. Nixon said: "It's all right. Your father's left a note. They've gone to Langdivock."

"Granny's not there," said Alice. "Mrs. Bell told me she'd seen her at the market."

There was silence for a few moments while they looked at each other. Mrs. Nixon was wrinkled and faded, Alice was young and fresh, but there was a hint of strain in both faces. Their work was hard, for they kept the house, and sometimes worked in the fields, while Nixon was a violent bully when in liquor. Between his fits of indulgence he was often morose, and he was always obstinate. In order to reach Langdivock he must cross the sands. The crossing was dangerous, since there were channels up which the flood-tide ran; but Nixon knew the way, and had taken the children to Langdivock before. The trouble was, the Sportsman Inn stood at the top of the lonning as one came from the beach. Alice and Mrs. Nixon did not talk about this, but each knew what the other thought.

"Oh, well," said Mrs. Nixon, "tide won't be in big gutter for an hour yet. They'll be back soon. We'll gan on with oor tea."

They ate and talked about the market, but now and then stopped and listened to the distant roar of the surf. It was louder than usual, and sounded like a train, although the night was calm. The tides were irregular, and sometimes, before a storm, the stream turned earlier than usual.

Alice was anxious and disturbed. She was fond of her little step-sisters, but she had other grounds for gloomy thought. Life was hard at Hallows, and there were numerous jars. She had been away at a good school, and her mother had left her a small legacy. The money, however, was in Nixon's hands, and she knew he would not give it her unless she married as he liked. She doubted if he had legal power to keep it back, but the marsh folk are primitive, and Nixon was hard to move. Moreover, he hated the man she had chosen. At length Mrs. Nixon got up.

"They're not coming," she said. "You'll

better gan to Dryholm and ask Stephen to look the sands."

The girl hesitated. Stephen would go willingly, but she had never entered Dryholm, and old Peter Strachan passed her with a sour look when they met. He was as stubborn as Nixon, with whom he had quarrelled when she was a child.

"You know I cannot go to Dryholm," she replied.

"Then I must," said Mrs. Nixon. "Peter willunt fratch with a woman, and the bairns canna be let to droon."

Alice conquered her reluctance and got her hat. Old Peter had a bitter tongue, and had told her that if she was a modest lass she would leave his son alone; but somebody must go, and her step-mother was lame with rheumatism.

"Oh, well," she said, "Stephen may be there, and, if he's not, I'm used to hard words."

Five minutes afterwards she walked fast through the fog that drifted in low-lying belts across the marsh. The roar of the sea was plainer, and she knew what it meant. Wind was coming from the west, and the tide beginning to creep up the gutters; but it would presently rise in a white-topped wave and run up the bay. For all that, she hesitated when she reached the Dryholm lonning. Misty moonlight touched the old house, and, standing beside a frozen pool, it looked desolate and forbidding with its black, tarred front and broken turf dyke. A yellow gleam shone through the crack of a shutter, but everything else was dark. Alice braced herself and opened the kitchen door.

There was no light except the uncertain glow of a peat fire, but she saw Peter Strachan knit his white brows as he looked up from his seat by the hearth.

"Weel," he said, "what are you wanting here, *Miss Nixon?*"

Alice was afraid of Strachan. He was like her father—grim and vindictive. There was a vein of primitive savageness in the older marshmen that they had, perhaps, inherited from their ancestors, the North Sea pirates. Their life was a struggle against a waterlogged soil and inhospitable climate, and Strachan was badly crippled by long exposure to the damp.

"Is Stephen about?" she asked.

Strachan gave her an ironical glance. "So he hasn't been to see you, and you have come to look for him! He's a canny lad and weel-doing; I reckon you'll not can let him go!"

"If he wants to go, he may," Alice rejoined, while the blood rushed to her face. "But I'll not take your word; Stephen can speak for himself."

"Aweel," said Strachan, who looked rather amused than angry, "I kenned you had pluck!"

"I've done you no harm," said Alice. "Now I've come for help."

Strachan did not hear all—he was rather deaf—and he rejoined thoughtfully, with his eyes fixed on her hot face: "You're Andrew Nixon's lass. I alloo that's no' your fault, but it canna be altered. Hooiver, you can gan back to Hallows. Stephen's no' aboot."

"Father's on the sands. He went to Langdivock. There's a fog, and we're afraid he has lost his way."

"Like enough! He'll not have left 'The Sportsman' sober. I wunner he has not drooned himsel' before noo."

"But he's taken the bairns!" Alice cried in desperation, and Strachan frowned as he looked at her.

"He'll ha' left them at oad Martha's."

"No. Martha was at the market, and could not have got home."

Strachan got up and leaned upon his stick. "The bairns! That's different. I canna gan. Frost's gripped my oad bones; I've not been doon t' lonning for a week. But Stephen's oot on sands, watching wild geese. Mayhappen you might find him near t' Swirrel bank." He limped across the floor and lifted down a long single-barrel fowling piece. "Tak' t' gun; he'll hear her if fog's ower thick to see."

Alice took the gun and bag of cartridges with dull surprise. It was a costly London-made duck-gun that Strachan had bought at a country house sale, and would not lend Stephen. She could not remember if she thanked him, for she had lost some time, and, running down the lonning, she plunged into the fog.

There was less fog on the wet sands, where Stephen followed the edge of a channel with a cheap double-barrel gun on his shoulder. As the tide rose, the wild geese would fly across to feed on the marsh, and Stephen knew the line they took. He was not shooting for sport; a grey-lag goose was worth some shillings, and money was scarce. Some day Dryholm would be his, for the Strachans had a traditional right to the lease, and his father would leave him enough to farm it well. Although it was a struggle against the weather, something could be done to improve the stock and soil, and

Stephen had studied modern methods that Strachan never tried.

In the meantime Strachan paid him a hired man's wages and worked him hard. They lived with stern frugality, and Strachan's savings, that would have earned a good profit if invested in new machines and better stock, were regularly banked. As he splashed across the muddy sands in his long waders, Stephen mused with a touch of bitterness. Marshcote, with its grazing *stints* and strip of plough land, was advertised, and the agent would give him the first chance; but money was needed, and Stephen had about a hundred pounds. Alice had two or three hundred, and his father was able to lend him the rest. Still, there was no use in thinking about Marshcote. If Nixon thought Alice meant to marry him, he would not give up her legacy, and Strachan would not let him have a shilling.

The quarrel began about a lame horse when Stephen was a boy. Then there was a dispute about the right to cut basket willows, and the grudge had grown to a sullen, illogical hate. The thing was ridiculous, but there it was, and it must be reckoned on. By and by, however, Stephen stopped and looked about. The tide was creeping up the channel, and he had some distance to go before he expected to get a shot at the geese. If he could fire both barrels into the flock, he might earn ten shillings, and he needed the money. For one thing, there was a small present he meant to buy for Alice.

As he went on he wondered whether it was a misfortune that he had been well taught at school, and had afterwards tried to study modern agriculture. He knew enough to see that his father's parsimonious methods were not economical, and often felt he was wasting such talents as he had; but he could not start in a new country without some capital, and he knew no trade. While his father lived he must work for a ploughman's wages and obey orders that he often knew were wrong. It was a dreary lot, but not uncommon. Others like him bore it well, and he tried to banish his disturbing thoughts.

The tide had begun to ripple in the gutter when he heard a noise like a hoarse, mocking laugh. It was a black-backed gull flying towards the marsh, and soon afterwards he heard the geese. He had not expected they would get up yet; there was a muddy spot where they fed until the tide drove them off. In the daytime they were afraid of a peregrine falcon that frequented the bay, but he did not think the peregrine hunted at night. Yet something had disturbed them, and their cries indicated that they were grey-lag. A lag goose was worth more than a brant or bernicle.

He stopped and crouched in a hollow of the bank, where sand the current undermined fell into the channel. Dim moonlight shone through, and the fog was thin, but his grey waders and yellow oilskins were indistinct against the bank. The harsh cries stopped and a measured beat of wings came out of the nearest belt of haze. The noise was marked by a curious creak, as if the wings were rusty. The geese were coming over, nearly a mile from their usual line, and Stephen wondered why they had left their feeding-grounds so soon.

The creak got louder; two or three indistinct objects with long necks cut against the sky. More appeared, and when the front of the straggling wedge was nearly overhead, Stephen threw up his gun. Two thin flashes leaped from the muzzle, a little smoke drifted about his head, and the echoes of the reports rolled across the sands. The wedge wheeled and broke up, there was a confused clamour, and he heard a splash in the channel and a thud on the opposite bank.

He plunged in, and the water was at his knees when he picked up a fat grey-lag. The other had fallen farther off. A trail of fog crept up, and he searched for some time before he found the goose. Then he stopped and listened. The geese had gone. One could not expect another shot, but the ducks were not so timid, and there was a pool half a mile off where he might find a widgeon. The surf, however, was ominously loud, and the tide would presently swirl up the channels in a white-topped bore. While he tried to calculate how long he could stop, he heard the shrill scream of oyster-catchers and the whistle of small wading birds across the misty sand. They had resumed feeding after the shot, but something had since disturbed them, as something had disturbed the geese.

He waited a few minutes, wondering whether he would go on to the pool. The water was rising behind him; there was, perhaps, some risk. And then he started, for another sound came out of the fog. It was faint, but strange to hear on the lonely sands. He thought it was like the cry of a frightened child. Stephen pushed the geese into his net bag and began to run. The geese were heavy, the ground was soft, and

his wet waders hampered him ; but if it was a child that called, he had no time to lose. He had learned while wild-fowling to locate a sound, and by and by a small, dark figure



"He saw a shadowy figure on the bank."

loomed out of the fog and ran to meet him. "Hullo, Anne!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

The child trembled, and he saw she was frightened and wet.

"Dolly's on the other side," she said.

"Across the gutter? But why did you leave her?"

"I went through first, because it was deep. Then I ran to see if there was a better place, and when I went back she had gone. Now I'm frightened. Perhaps she's drowned."

"That's silly," said Stephen. "She

can't have got drowned. We're going to find her. Come along!"

He gave the child his hand, but she was tired and kept him back. It was not a time to bother her by questions, and to some extent he understood. Dolly was younger, and Anne had been afraid to take her across the channel until she tried its depth. Stephen knew it was not as deep as the other that he had crossed; the trouble was, it was some distance off and the tide was rising fast. The fog, however, was not thick, the moon was up, and he could see Anne's footsteps in the soft ground. When they reached the edge of the channel, he stopped.

"You must wait here and not move until I come back," he said. "If I call you, shout as loud as you can."

She clung to him, but he gently shook her off and plunged into the water. It was not deep, but it was running up the channel, and rippled about his legs. When he got across he found some small footprints. They were not plain, and for a time puzzled him; but, after striking some matches, he saw two rows of tracks. One indicated that both children had wandered about together, the other that one had gone along the bank alone. He followed this, and presently found the child, sitting, limp and tearful, near the advancing tide.

"Anne's gone—I've lost her!" she wailed, as he came up.

"Anne's all right," said Stephen, and took her in his arms.

He had been luckier than he had thought. But there was something else that might have to be done, and he asked: "Where's daddy?"

"Daddy didn't come wiv us; we com't ourselves," she said.

This was enough for Stephen, who had been disturbed about Nixon. Speed was needful, and although he had some trouble to carry Dolly and his gun, he crossed the channel and went back to Anne. It would embarrass him to carry both children, but he pushed the gun through the net of his game-bag before he picked Dolly up again. Then, as they set off, a thick belt of fog rolled across the sand.

For a time Stephen tried to guide himself by the noise of the sea. He must keep the surf on his right, and after crossing the channel he would reach the Point, where the marsh ran out. The dull roar was nearer than he liked; but if he bore to the left, he might wander up the bay, which widened behind its mouth. Still, he knew the sands, and there would not be much risk when he reached the shore flats; the trouble was he could not find the channel. The fog was getting very thick, and rolled by in smothering grey waves.

The sweat began to run down Stephen's face. He was anxious and heavily loaded; but the geese were worth ten shillings, and it would be a long time before he could save enough to buy another gun. Besides, little Anne could not walk faster if he threw away his load. He went on, trying to comfort the children, and breathing hard while he listened to the advancing surf. He bore to the right and then to the left; but the sand ran on smooth and level, and there was nothing to indicate the slope to the gutter. The water would be getting deep, and soon the white-topped bore would sweep up the hollow. Still he could not find it. The surf was horribly loud, and he dreaded to see it glimmer in the fog. They were a mile from land, and tides run fast and rise high when the moon is full.

He was breathless, and Anne was crying from fatigue, when he stopped abruptly. A sharp report rolled across the waste, and he wondered who was shooting, since the water had driven the wild-fowl from their feeding-grounds. There was another report, and he thought he knew the noise. It was a larger gun than the usual 12-bore, and like his father's No. 10. But his father had kept the house for a week, because he could not walk. For all that, the fellow who had fired the shots was on the other side of the channel, and the noise was a guide. Stephen shouted, and heard the gun again.

He was nearly sure of its location, and ran forward, dragging little Anne. There was another report. He knew the shooter meant to guide him now, and presently something glimmered in the fog. He stopped at the edge of the water and put Dolly down while he got his breath. He could not see across, but drifting weed and flakes of scum showed how fast the current ran. Moreover, it was creeping up the bank, and he took Anne in his arms.

"You're heaviest," he said. "Don't be frightened—hold tight."

After a few moments he lost the bank, and the water rose to his waist and made confused eddies as it ran past. He could hardly keep his feet, and was sorry he had not left the geese and gun; but he could not get rid of them now, although, if the water got deeper, it would sweep him and

the child away. It did not get deeper. The current slackened, and as he stumbled forward he saw a shadowy figure on the bank. The figure ran to meet him with a cry, and he gasped as he put Anne into her step-sister's arms.

"Oh, Stephen!" she said, and kissed him. Then she asked: "Where's Dolly?"

"On the other side; I'm going back," he said, throwing down his load; and Alice clung to him for a moment and then let him go.

He could now move freely, but the water was deeper, and it would be a race to get across in time. On his way he fell into a hole and thought he would have to swim, and then gasped with relief as his feet touched bottom. One cannot swim far in waders and oilskins. He got across, and, seizing Dolly, threw her on his shoulder when he plunged in, and had afterwards only a blurred recollection of the last struggle. He was swept off his feet by swirling water, and nearly went under, but found bottom and staggered on again. For a few moments he was forced to stop for breath while the current foamed about his waist, and then the fierce rush slackened as the eddy revolved, and he made some ground. He could not speak when he came out, and Alice put her arms round him when he dropped the child. She was laughing and sobbing, but he did not know what she said.

Then Stephen pulled himself together and, picking up bag and gun, set off with Dolly, while Alice followed with Anne.

"I think I can find the Point, but we must be quick," he said hoarsely.

A few moments afterwards a dull roar came out of the fog, and Alice, glancing back, saw a broad white line stretched across the hollow. It passed and vanished, but there was an angry splash as the undermined bank went down, and glimmering water flowed across the sand. Alice urged the tired child, and caught her breath with a dry sob when they left the advancing flood.

"In another minute or two you would have been too late," she said.

"It doesn't matter now," Stephen answered rather gruffly, for he disliked emotional strain. "Perhaps Anne can tell us why your father let her and Dolly cross the sands alone."

Anne's story was confused, but Stephen understood that Nixon had taken the children to the inn and had stopped some time. He quarrelled with another man, and when they made a noise Anne got frightened and Dolly began to cry. They ran out, and, after wandering up and down in the cold, resolved to go home. Anne had crossed the sands before, and did not lose her way until the fog rolled up. Stephen, knowing Nixon's habits, imagined he would not miss the children, and would be incapable of looking for them if the landlady remarked that they had gone. He would stop at Langdivock until morning, as he often did. Alice agreed, and they pushed on for the Point, which they presently reached.

Next morning Nixon came home, repentant and badly alarmed. His head ached, his eyes were dull, and his face was haggard, but Mrs. Nixon went on with her occupation when he entered the kitchen. She owed her step-daughter and Stephen much, and had chosen her line.

"Where's t' bairns?" Nixon asked awkwardly.

"You ought to ken," his wife replied. "They went with you."

Nixon looked hard at her, and his voice was hoarse as he resumed: "Have they no come back?"

For a few moments Mrs. Nixon kept him in suspense. Then she said: "They're here, no thanks to you! Stephen and Alice found them wannering on t' sands, but he was nearly too late to bring them across big gutter."

"Stephen's a canny lad," Nixon remarked, and sat down limply, for he had borne some strain. "I've nowt against him except that he's oad Peter's son. Weel, I'll tak' a cup o' tea and gan off to bed."

"You will not," said Mrs. Nixon, who had conquered her fear of him and knew she must be firm. "You'll bide here and listen, my man. You're not fit to bring up children, and the bairns are mine. I've had enough o' slaving for a drunken brute, and I'll gan back to Langdivock, unless you give Alice her mother's money."

"Why does she want t' money?" Nixon asked, with a suspicious frown.

"So she can marry Stephen. Marshcote's to let, and agent will give him t' lease."

Nixon growled, but he was too dull and shaken by strain and liquor for rage. Besides, he saw his wife was resolute, and after some sullen grumbling he gave way.

"She can have t' money," he said, and added with a sour smile: "It's no' enough, and if they mean to get t' rest from oad Peter, they've a hard nut to crack. Noo give me some tea, and let me gan to bed."

He went off, and Mrs. Nixon admitted that the hardest fight was yet to come. Still, Alice's money would help, and Stephen was as obstinate as his father. He came in by and by, and, after they had made a plan, went back to Dryholm and stated his terms. Strachan, he argued, could not carry on the farm with the help of his herd. Wages were high, and he could not hire a man who would work and care for the land like his son. Marshcote was small, and with occasional help the two farms could be worked together. It was obvious that the plan had economical advantages. Stephen wanted two hundred pounds, which would be repaid, and, if he was refused, Alice and he would try their luck in Canada.

Strachan fought hard and used bitter words, but by and by saw that he was beaten.

"Weel," he said, "t' lass has pluck, and the warst I ken o' her is that she comes o' a bad stock. Hooiver, since they say t' lass and Andrew dinnot agree, mayhappen she will not want t' oad wastrel hanging aboot t' farm."

Stephen felt limp when he went out, for his father was a stern antagonist, and the victory had cost him much. He took Marshcote, and when Alice was married she wore a grey goose feather in her hat.



"A CANADIAN EVE." BY MRS. A. GUIDO BACH.

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DON JUNE
AN OFFICE IDYLL

By PAULA HUDD

Illustrated by Howard Van Dusen

IT was Horace, the office boy, who gave him the nickname. Horace was under the impression that Don June was a gentleman of history who affected frilled shirts and feminine society, and was altogether a bit of a nut. And Markham changed his shirt twice a week, instead of wearing paper cuff-protectors, as he (Horace) was in the habit of doing, while the said shirt was soft and tucked. All of which Horace, safe in his breast-shield of reversible celluloid, designated as foppish, so that Markham became Don June in the annals of the office.

It was on a dull day in November, during the slack fifteen minutes following the lunch hour, that Don June first heard of a matter which was destined to alter the course of his existence.

Miss Goddard, the book-keeping clerk, was already back at her desk, her narrow back bent over her ledger. It would seem that, when Miss Goddard had come into this world, the fairies at her cradle-head had blessed her with all the useful rather than ornamental attributes—sound sense they had given her, sanity and sobriety, strength of purpose, and skill with figures, and a special superiority withal, but having by that time exhausted every available "s," they had perforce to leave out a soul.

The scratching of her pen, and the sibilant sound that proceeded from her thin lips as she totted up a column of figures, were a source of annoyance to Markham, as he stood against the window, whistling a snatch of opera, and wondering why the sight of factory chimneys piled against a slate-grey sky should fill him with unrest.

Horace was engaged in stacking up a pile of ledgers on a stool, which was destined to be lurched against at a given moment, in order to deter Miss Goddard from her abominable conscientiousness and cause her to raise her pale eyes from her ledger for one breathless moment. It is sufficient that Horace considered it worth it.

With his back to the fire, Hawker—the oldest member of the staff—peered over his spectacles, watching the preparations with short-sighted, appreciative eyes.

For sheer unattractive ugliness it would have been hard to beat Hawker, and the fact had been a nightmare to him till the coming of Miss Martin, the manager's secretary.

Once in a fit of expansiveness he had confessed to Miss Martin that his ugliness was embittering his whole life. She had looked up at him with sincerely puzzled eyes.

"But I wouldn't bother about my face if I had beautiful hands like yours," she had said simply.

From that moment life had been glorified for old Hawker. His long, supple, white hands—the hands of an artist, had he but known it—had become a compensation and an inspiration.

The pile having reached the necessary proportions, Horace crossed the office, and coming back with his hands in his pockets, and his eyes lifted in shining innocence to the ceiling, executed a Charlie Chaplin side-slip as he passed the stool.

The result was all that he had hoped for. Miss Goddard's pen slid drunkenly across her ledger, Markham swung round from his contemplation of factory chimneys, and Daisy, the telephone girl, coming in with a fresh-filled vase of flowers, incontinently tipped quite half the water down Miss Goddard's neck. The latter *contretemps* was better than Horace's wildest dreams.

Giving a highly-coloured version of the incident afterwards, he had remarked that, as a film, it would have outdone the funniest Charlie Chaplin stunt he had ever witnessed.

It was Daisy—mopping up the spilt water

with thick wads of the firm's best blotting-paper—who first mentioned the matter of Miss Martin's eyes.

"If the oculist says Miss Martin must give up using her eyes, the boss'll have to give her the push, I suppose, won't he?" she queried of no one in particular.

Horace, not being retiring of disposition, took it upon himself to answer for the office.

"*And* give her fifty quid annually, as a mark of appreciation, with a country cottage for herself and her crippled ma—*I don't think!*" he ejaculated, with biting sarcasm, having recently been refused a half-crown rise.

Markham grew suddenly attentive.

"But has she really got a crippled mother?" he asked.

Hawker looked across at him, taking in the attractiveness of the good-looking, boyish head silhouetted against the window. He brought his hand out of his pocket quickly and tucked his thumb in his arm-hole, spreading out his long, white fingers.

"Yes, they live on her earnings, I believe," he answered.

Daisy, forgetful of the duties awaiting her in the telephone-room, sat back on her heels.

"She hasn't got no boy, neither, has she?" she remarked, surveying the turquoise and pearl atrocity on her own left hand with manifest satisfaction, "But she won't be anything near blind, will she, Mr. Hawker?"

Horace, conscious of the fact that there had been at least two minutes' conversation in which he had not taken part, composed his round face to a suitable expression of sobriety.

"Puts me in mind of 'The Rosary' a bit," he interposed, with the air of a much-read man of the world.

Hawker ignored the interruption.

"No, she won't be blind," he answered, "nothing approaching blind, but he has ordered her to give up work altogether—that is, work that necessitates the use of her eyes. I'd like to see her married to some decent chap who could afford to look after her and her mother. It's rough luck on her."

Markham turned again to his contemplation of the factory chimneys. Suddenly he felt that life was needlessly complex. The glimpse that he caught of the City roofs against the grey sky struck a poignant unrest into his heart and mind; but if he shut his eyes to it, and called up a mental picture of Miss Martin, the unrest was not lessened, only intensified a thousandfold.

"Some nice chap who could afford it!"

And in the bank lay the hard-earned hundred and seventy pounds that—once they had totalled two hundred—were destined to give him the year's voice training that was his one tremendous ambition.

To sing, to learn to use to its best advantage the voice he knew himself to possess—to be able to look on those same factory chimneys and sing of the poignant wonder they inspired—that would be to live! Strange snatches of tune hummed in his head: to learn to put them down so that they might never be lost—surely two hundred pounds could achieve that!

Fame he did not want, but self-expression was a tremendous need with him, and he could not even play his own accompaniments.

Miss Goddard, returning to her desk, after spending an uncomfortable five minutes crouching in the corridor with her back to the radiator, chose to vent her spite on Daisy, who was still being lavish with blotting-paper.

"Some people get paid to do nothing!" she said acidly. "And, not content with wasting the firm's time, you must waste their blotting-paper, too! I shouldn't have thought it was so difficult to carry a vase straight. I've no use for incompetents."

Horace rose to the occasion.

"It was all my fault," he said nobly, lifting his chubby chin well out of his washable collar. "I'll finish clearing that up, Daisy." He thrust his hands into his pockets and strolled over to Markham. "'Pon my word," he continued, in a noisy whisper, "some women can be catty! It's a rotten life for girls who haven't a chap to stick up for them, isn't it, Don June?"

The words came to Markham out of his dreams. He looked down at Horace with troubled eyes that for once did not hold any twinkle to be sternly suppressed.

"I suppose it is, old chap," he answered, and he sighed as he turned to his desk.

* * * * *

That night Don June saw Miss Martin home. They walked down Queen Victoria Street to the Embankment, intending to take the tram there.

"If you're not too tired, let's walk along the Embankment and get on at Westminster," he suggested.

She agreed eagerly. "I'd love it," she said, "but I don't enjoy it when I'm alone. The river makes me miserable then—happy and miserable all at once, somehow—as though—— Oh, I don't know!"

A tramcar ran by as she spoke, and he



"Horace, stamping letters with the deliberation due to such proceeding, gave expression to his opinion in the matter. 'Don June is sweet on Miss Martin,' he announced."

caught a glimpse of her face, small and eager and unnoticeable save for the big, beautiful eyes, which were at that moment raised to his. He remembered with a pang.

She told him about the oculist's decision quite simply.

"I don't really mind *badly*," she said, "but I've got to give up my job, and that means an explanation to mother. I didn't want to tell her, you know."

Don June was staring out across the river.

"I shouldn't tell her yet," he said. "You won't be going till the end of the month, and lots may happen before then."

By a common instinct they had stopped against the parapet, and she put her arms out across it with a little impotent gesture.

"What would you really like to be or do if you had your way?" she queried irrelevantly. She looked up into his face, trying to read it by the light of a street lamp, and wondered at the sudden pain that gleamed in his eyes.

"I used to think I'd like to be able to sing really well," he said; "but now—— What do you want to be?"

She shook her head. "I'm not good at anything, really," she answered. "There's nothing I can do myself, but working with the manager has made me feel, somehow, that perhaps I could *help* somebody clever—help them to make the most of themselves, and——" She stopped suddenly, conscious of the interpretation that might be put upon her words.

He stooped down eagerly. "Are you musical? Do you—do you play?" he queried.

She hesitated a moment, dimly conscious of something electric in the atmosphere. Then she drew back a little.

"I can't read a note of music," she said, and to them both it was as though a door shut suddenly, leaving them in a great silence.

* * * * *

Horace, stamping letters with the deliberation due to such an important proceeding, gave expression to his opinion in the matter.

"Don June is sweet on Miss Martin," he announced, dexterously recovering His Majesty's head from an inverted position on the envelope with the aid of a not too clean forefinger. Miss Martin, coming in at that moment, put a stop to further remarks.

Old Hawker watched her as she went to Miss Goddard with some letters, and followed her with his eyes as she crossed the office again to put some papers on Markham's desk. There was a wonderful light in her face, and for one moment her hand rested lightly on the empty stool. Then she raised her eyes and met Hawker's short-sighted, kindly gaze.

A slow blush dyed her cheeks, but she faced him steadily and smiled serenely back at him.

It was Horace who ran across to open the door for her, and he hummed the Wedding March under his breath as she passed out.

* * * * *

That night they walked along the Embankment together for the sixth time, and Don June asked if he might come right home with her.

She agreed, and was thankful for the merciful darkness, since her face might have betrayed the hope in her heart.

It was he who carried the simple meal into her mother's room.

"Peggy has told me about you," she said. "It's nice for her to have found a friend at the office."

She appraised him with a glance, and did not find him wanting.

"I want to marry Peggy," he managed to say at last. "I've just on two hundred in the bank, for a start, and with three pounds ten a week the three of us ought to manage."

At that she smiled happily, for "the three of us" had come quite naturally and spontaneously.

"Go down and ask her," she said, "and don't be wasting your time with an old woman."

* * * * *

After the meal they wandered into the little firelit drawing-room, and Peggy buried herself in an arm-chair.

"Light the gas, if you want it," she said. But he shook his head and stood leaning against the mantel-shelf, looking down into the fire.

All the old longings were crowding back—the old pain was there, too. There was something in the atmosphere of the room that moved him to unrest. He turned quickly.

"Peggy," he said, "will you marry me?"

She turned her face from the firelight so that it was in shadow.

"Why do you want me to?" she asked in a muffled voice. "Is it so that I can give mother that reason for leaving the office?"

A moment ago he would have felt that to be true, but suddenly he was on his knees before her.

"No," he said quickly, putting his arms round her; "it's because I need you, Peggy—because I love you, dear!"

She leant forward at that and took his head between her hands.

"Then why are your eyes so sad?" she questioned.

He buried his head in her lap.

"I don't know," he said. "I *am* happy if you'll say you love me."

She bent sudddenly and kissed his head.

"Horace should have called you Don Quixote," she said.

He looked up quickly. "Why?" he queried, and wondered at the tears in her eyes.

"Oh, nothing!" she said, and laughed a little.

He stood up suddenly and, drawing her up, held her close.

"Will you marry me, Peggy?" he asked again.

She drew herself away.

"You must sing to me, and then, perhaps, I'll tell you."

"I can't sing without music." He pushed his hand through his hair. "And yet—the most wonderful things have come to me since I knew you. Listen!"

She had slipped out of the firelight, and he could only dimly define her figure against the piano. He knelt up on a chair boyishly, and over the back of it he serenaded her in the shadows.

It was an air of his own that he was singing, but the words had come from some forgotten book of poetry. He was happy—happier than he had been for weeks—and so carried away that he did not see her move.

Then softly, sweetly from the piano came the echo of his song, a little falteringly at first, and then more surely.

He listened for a moment spellbound, and then he was across the room in one great stride.

"Peggy," he almost shouted, "you said you couldn't play! Oh, my dear, *my dear!*"

She leaned back against his arm, laughing softly.

"I didn't! I said I couldn't *read* a note. I play from ear," she said. "And—isn't it time you asked me again, Don June?"

* * * * *

Horace gave them a silver-plated tray, and on the piece of pasteboard attached were inscribed the words—

"To Don June, with best wishes, from one who gave him the name with sincere affection and no malice intended—Horace."

BARLEY GOLD.

THERE be three bulrushes tied to yonder tree,
And I carried them home from the West Country,
Where I went a-harvesting above the Dorset sea.
In the oats and the wheat and the barley.

All with the bulrushes tied to yonder bough,
I tied a handful of the barley mow,
And of wheat from the knap and of oats from the knave,
Black Barbary oats and barley.

There be three bulrushes tied to yonder tree,
'Twas a gift from the workers in the West Country,
Who toiled in the golden fields along with me,
In the oats and the wheat and the barley.

But what brought you home-along, beside these three?
Nought brought I home'ard, save a heart whole and free;
No hoard o' silver money, but a hope as sweet as honey,
Which I leased in the hyles o' golden barley.

When the swallows twitter home from over sea,
The birds shall build their nests of the bulrushes three,
Of the straws of the wheat and black oats o' Barbary,
And shall build new hopes for you and for me
With the oats and the wheat and the barley!

ALICE E. GILLINGTON.

THE EFFECT OF THE WAR UPON INDIA'S PLACE IN THE EMPIRE

By ST. NIHAL SINGH

THE War has been steadily altering India's position in the British Empire, but the transition has been so gentle that its effect has been almost altogether lost upon people in Britain and in the Dominions.

In order to gauge the changes that have occurred, it is necessary to turn the pages of history back to the autumn of 1914, when the great conflict began. The presence of India in the Empire was at that time a source of great pride to Britain. British statesmen spoke of her as the brightest jewel in the Imperial diadem. What other Western nation held in tutelage so vast and so populous a country—a land famed in history, and possessing a culture antedating European civilisation by thousands of years?

India was, however, a possession, not a partner. She was a Dependency, not a Dominion. The whole world knew that India was *in* the Empire, but not *of* it. Unlike the Colonials, Indians had no blood relationship with the British, nor did they have the tie of common culture.

Not a few Britons believed that India had been conquered by the sword, and that she was held by the sword. Only scholars had any conception of the aid that Indians had rendered to the British during the lengthy struggle that finally ended in the establishment of British domination over India. Only the intelligent among the British who had lived in the country realised that the security of British rule in India lay in the implicit trust that Indians reposed in British integrity, and that the British Raj could not exist for a day without their willing co-operation.

Writers—British and otherwise—speculated from time to time about what India would do in case Britain became involved in a struggle for existence with her neighbours. Those scribes often impugned Indian fidelity, causing much pain to Indians.

Agitation carried on by Indians to raise India from the status of a Dependency to that of a Dominion was denounced as a sinister movement aiming at independence. Constitutional movements for political reform were suspect, and efforts were made to belittle and to retard them.

If Britain knew but little about conditions in India, and about Indian aspirations, the Dominions knew less. Few in the Overseas Dominions had visited India or come in contact with cultured Indians. Practically the only Indians whom they had met before the War were men of adventurous spirit who had been driven by poverty out of their country to seek fortune in thinly-populated outlying units of the Empire. Their presence in the Dominions raised questions of wages, hours of labour, and standards of life, occasioned brawls, and accentuated social and religious differences.

Such was the position of India in the British Empire when Britain went to war with the Central Powers.

As soon as hostilities began, India refused to be a dependent, and insisted upon being a partner—a partner in the sacrifice of blood, treasure, and materials. She had a large standing army—larger than the armies of all the Dominions put together, and not far short of the British standing Army, excluding the Territorials. She had almost a limitless reserve of man-power and of the materials needed to keep fighting forces in the field, and to support the civilian population in the United Kingdom.

The demand went forth from all classes of Indians that they must stand shoulder to shoulder with the British and Dominions forces to stem the tide of German aggression. The Indian representatives in the Imperial Legislative Council unanimously implored the Government to permit India to share with the British the financial burden of the struggle. Donations for war funds of every

description poured forth from individuals all over the country.

No Indian sought a *quid pro quo* from the King-Emperor's representative in India, or from His Majesty's Government in Whitehall. The people of India realised that the world had been set on fire by Germany, and that all the might of the Empire and of its Allies was needed to extinguish the conflagration. That thought blotted everything else out of India's mind.

Indian fighters fared forth in battle array from Bombay and Karachi, impelled by the desire to help their British and Allied comrades to stamp out the fire that was blasting France and Flanders, and that threatened at

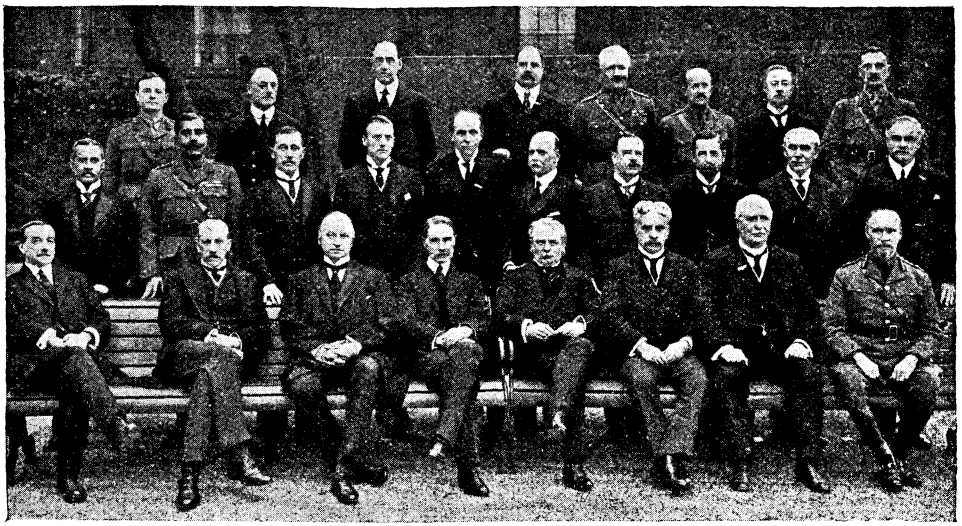


Photo by] [*Bassano.*

INDIA REPRESENTED IN THE IMPERIAL WAR CABINET IN 1917: A GROUP IN THE GARDEN OF 10, DOWNING STREET, THE PREMIER'S RESIDENCE.

In the front row, from left to right, are seated: Mr. Arthur Henderson (Minister without Portfolio), Lord Milner (Minister without Portfolio), Lord Curzon (Lord President of the Council), Mr. Bonar Law (Chancellor of the Exchequer), Mr. Lloyd George (Premier), Sir Robert Borden (Premier of Canada), Mr. W. F. Massey (Premier of New Zealand), and General Smuts (Minister of Defence, South Africa). In the middle row are: Sir S. P. Sinha (first native member of Viceroy's Council, India), the Maharajah of Bikanir (representing the Ruling Princes of India), Sir James Meston (Lieutenant-Governor of United Provinces of Agra and Oudh), Mr. Austen Chamberlain (Secretary for India), Lord Robert Cecil (Minister of Blockade), Mr. Walter Long (Colonial Secretary), Sir Joseph Ward (Finance Minister, New Zealand), Sir George Perley (Minister of Canadian Overseas Forces), Mr. Robert Rogers (Canadian Minister of Public Works), and Mr. J. D. Hazen (Canadian Minister of Marine). In the back row are: Captain L. S. Amery, M.P., Admiral Jellicoe (First Sea Lord of the Admiralty), Sir Edward Carson (First Lord of the Admiralty), Lord Derby (Secretary for War), Major-General F. B. Maurice (Director of Military Operations, Imperial General Staff), Lieutenant-Colonel Sir M. Hankey (Secretary to Committee of Imperial Defence), Mr. Henry Lambert (Secretary to the Imperial Conference), and Major Storr (Assistant Secretary).

that time to spread across the English Channel to Britain. With that thought haunting them, Indians generously subscribed to funds that were opened to relieve the distress of men, women, and children whose lives had been devastated by the War.

Seared upon my memory are the recollections of the days when India, for the first time in history, stood revealed before the British as a partner who, during a period of perfidy, when solemn treaties were mere scraps of paper, could be depended upon to sacrifice her last drop of blood to protect Britain's honour and interests. How the British attitude towards Indians changed!

Indians residing in Britain, who erstwhile had attracted the rude notice of the street gamins, became heroes of the hour. Wherever they went they were warmly greeted by the populace. English men and women who passed them in the street insisted upon shaking hands with them and telling them how grateful they felt that India was coming to Britain's assistance in her hour of crisis.

I remember particularly well one incident that occurred at that time. A party of us Sikhs were walking in Shepherd's Bush, when some British Tommies sighted us. They made for us at once, and began to praise our soldierly race.

A few days later the conductor of a tramcar came up to me and said exultantly:

"The Germans may be playing the mischief now, but just wait until your people

get after them! They will sing a different tune then!"

Almost four long years have gone by since then, during which Indians have mingled their blood with that of Britons in every theatre of war in which the sons of the Empire have been fighting. They have borne with stoic resignation their share of privations and bereavements, and have won numerous distinctions for gallantry.

To-day India is as zealous in the cause as she was in the initial weeks of the conflict. Her men, money, and materials are still pouring out of her ports in an ever-increasing stream. From time to time Indian publicists have urged the Government to make the fullest possible use of India's resources to make victory surer and speedier. Sir her, it was evident that the change in the British attitude towards India that had taken place in the autumn of 1914 was not ephemeral, but had come to stay.

A recent incident showed me that the War had wrought a similar change in the Dominions' attitude towards Indians. As I was walking in a London street, I was hailed by an Anzac. He told me that he had fought by the side of Indians in Gallipoli. "Brave fellows they were," he said, "absolutely unafraid of shrapnel and shot, and true as steel." Before the War he would never have thought that Indians were such good fighters and such splendid pals. In fact, he continued, he had always looked upon Indians as "coolies," who must be kept out of Australia at all cost. The

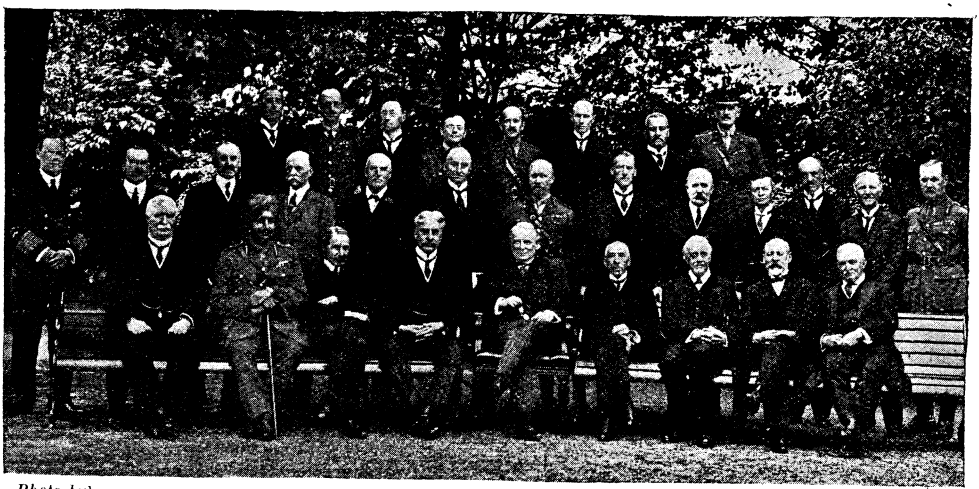


Photo by] [*Vandyk.*

INDIA REPRESENTED IN THE GATHERED STATESMANSHIP OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN 1918: MEMBERS OF THE IMPERIAL WAR CONFERENCE IN THE GARDEN AT 10, DOWNING STREET.

In the lower group, from left to right, are: (Front row) Mr. W. F. Massey, the Maharajah of Patiala, Mr. Bonar Law, Sir Robert Borden, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. W. M. Hughes, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Joseph Cook, the Hon. W. F. Lloyd. (Middle row) Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, Sir Joseph Ward, the Hon. N. W. Rowell, Mr. Walter Long, Mr. G. N. Barnes, Lord Curzon, General Smuts, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, the Hon. J. A. Calder, the Hon. H. Burton, Mr. E. S. Montagu, Sir Joseph Maclay, General Sir G. M. Macdonagh. (Back row) Sir William Weir, General Sykes, Colonel G. Lambert, Colonel Amery, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Maurice Hankey, the Hon. A. Meighen, Sir S. P. Sinha, and Colonel Storr.

Dinshaw Wacha, the eminent politician and industrialist, for instance, reminded the authorities, at the last Bombay session of the Indian National Congress, that millions in India were waiting to serve.

During these years, reeking with blood, there have been times when India dropped out of the British press, and did not bulk large in the British eye. But even at such moments her part in the War was never completely obscured. The British never quite forgot what she had done in the most critical period of the War. Whenever anything happened to attract their attention to baptism of fire and blood had altered all that, however, and now he was as proud as proud could be of Indians.

I asked him if this change had been confined to himself. He emphatically replied that every Australian and New Zealander who had seen Indians fight entertained the highest opinion of them.

I learned from him that a fine spirit of *camaraderie* prevailed between the soldiers from his country and those from my homeland. The Indians gave their *chapatties*—thin, pancake-like bread—to the Anzacs, who ate them as if they were the greatest delicacy



INDIAN SOWARS AND BRITISH TROOPERS ON THE WESTERN FRONT.

Drawn by A. Forestier from material supplied by an eye-witness.

in the world. He was very sorry that the "Sykes" (Sikhs) did not smoke, but he and his comrades freely exchanged cigarettes with the Gurkhas.

My informant had an especially warm corner in his heart for the Indian medical men. There were several of them on the ship that took him from Gallipoli to the base hospital. His wounds had been dressed by a bearded, turbanned "Syke," who had handled him with gentleness that he would remember to the end of his days.

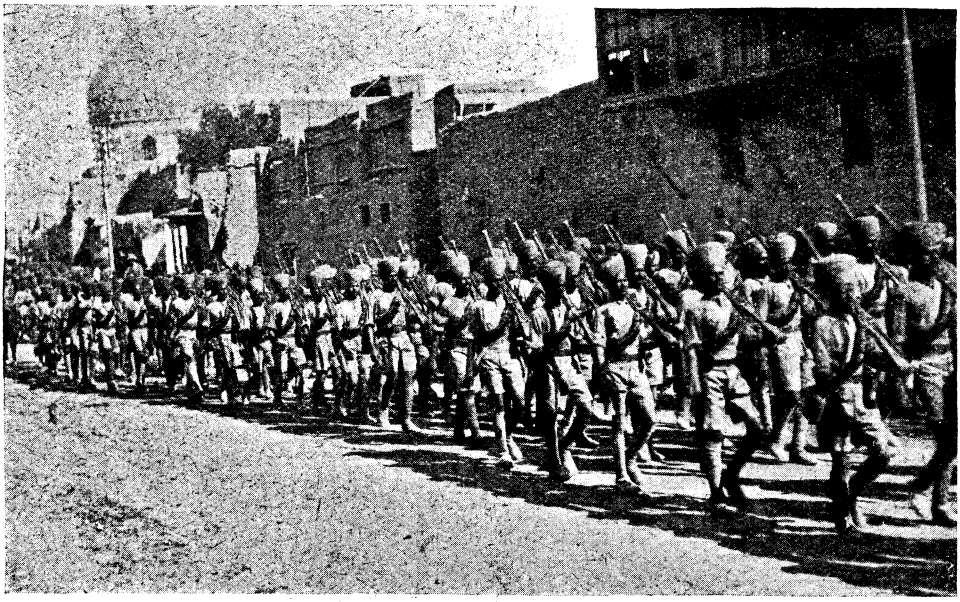
Letters written by the Overseas soldiers to their respective homes reflect a fellowship that did not exist between Indians and members of other units of the Empire before the War. Some of these letters have found their way into the press, and the warm sentiments expressed in them have delighted all Indian hearts.

The spirit in which the proposal to accord India a place in the Imperial Conference was received by the public and press of the Empire, in itself showed that a change of heart had taken place. Before the War such a proposal was not given even serious consideration. It was declared that only self-governing Dominions could be represented in the Imperial Conference, and, since India had not got Home Rule, she was automatically debarred.

A few months after the outbreak of war, an Indian member of the Imperial Legislative Council of India introduced a resolution praying that his people might be officially represented at the Imperial Conference. Lord Hardinge, then Viceroy and Governor-General, accepted the resolution tentatively. All that he could promise was that His Majesty's Government would give it sympathetic consideration.

The Colonial press lost no time in declaring that India had bought with her blood the right to enter the Empire's councils. The British press echoed the same sentiment.

Early in 1917, when Mr. Lloyd George issued the call to the Overseas Dominions to send representatives for a "Council of War," India was not forgotten. Two eminent Indians—one of them a sovereign-ruler in his own right and name, and the other a British-Indian official—sat as full-fledged members at the Imperial War Conference that held its sittings in London during March and April of that year. They were also admitted into the meetings of the Imperial War Cabinet held during those months. Though present in the latter assembly only as advisers of Mr. Austen



PART OF THE INDIAN FORCES IN MESOPOTAMIA, SOME OF WHICH SHARED IN THE CAPTURE OF TEKRIT: TROOPS ON THE MARCH THROUGH BAGHDAD.

From an official photograph.



INDIA'S PART IN THE PALESTINE CAMPAIGN: A SIKH MOUNTAIN BATTERY IN ACTION NORTH OF JERICHO.

Drawn by Ernest Prater from a sketch by an officer.

Chamberlain, then Secretary of State for India, nothing, no matter how confidential, was kept from them. Before the Dominion representatives returned to their respective homes they had unanimously resolved to give India a place in all future Imperial Conferences.

Sir Satyendra Prasanna Sinha, one of the two Indians who participated in the Conference, accorded to me an interview almost immediately it had ended. He told me that the representatives of the Dominions and he and his colleagues discussed various questions pertaining to the Empire in a frank and friendly spirit. He admitted that the Colonial point of view was new to the Indian representatives, as the Indian point of view must have been new to the Dominions delegates. The Indians told their difficulties and responsibilities, and the Dominions representatives explained theirs. The Indians learned of the potentialities of the Dominions, and the Dominions representatives learned of the possibilities of India. That was the first time, he remarked, that representatives of the Dominions and of India had met at a round table and tried to understand each other. He was thoroughly convinced that the basis had been established for whole-hearted co-operation between members of the Empire divided by distance, race, and civilisation, but united in allegiance to the Sovereign and by common interests.

Much has been said and written, since that conference concluded its sittings, about providing India with an outlet for her growing population, which is pressing heavily upon the soil, causing poverty and unrest. Fresh accessions are sure to be made to the Empire as the result of the War, some of which will be ideally suited for Indian colonisation.

Take, for instance, German East Africa. An Indian contingent opened the campaign there, and, reinforced with fresh troops from India, has been helping to clear the country of the enemy. Its topography and climate are not unlike those of certain parts of India, hence it has been suggested that this land may be turned into an Indian colony.

It is well to remember, in this connection, that Indians have practically made British East Africa what it is. The railways there have been built and are run by Indians, the traders are mostly Indians, and the plantations are largely manned by Indians. The Indian settlers there have been very patriotic since the commencement of hostilities, and their services have elicited high praise.

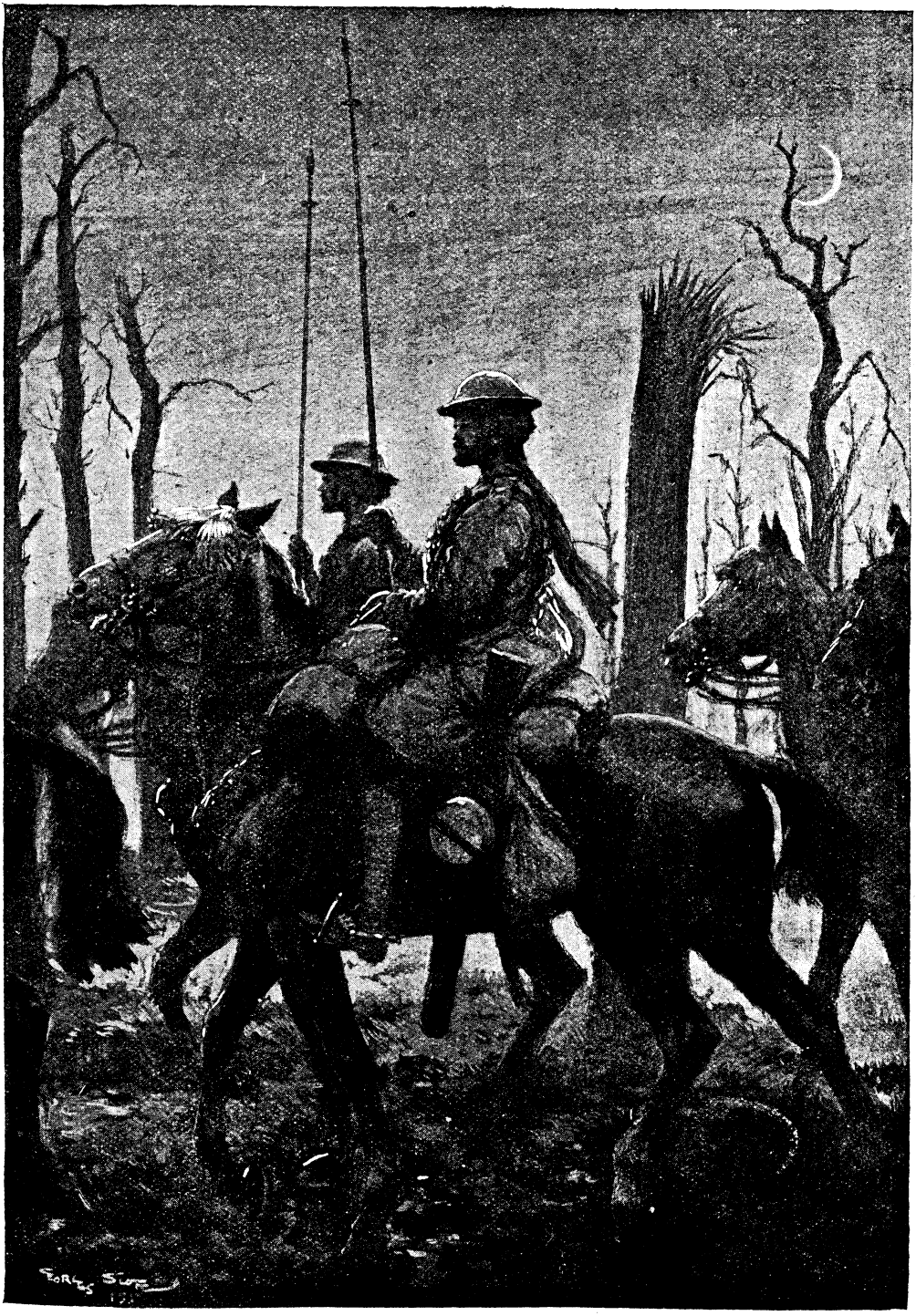
Indians have also poured out their blood in Mesopotamia, of which at least a part is likely to remain in the British Empire. The country is separated from India merely by the Persian Gulf. Before the War India had an outpost at Aden.

As land has been seized from the Turks, government has been established and carried on by officials sent out from India. Basra has been made the nerve centre of an efficient administration. Means of communication are being established, and sanitary reforms are being carried out. The former subjects of Turkey are happy to be rid of their masters, who tyrannised over them. They will consider themselves fortunate to have their land permanently included in the Indian Empire.

Mesopotamia and the Punjab—the wheat-producing province of India—have many similar features. Both have an extensive river system, though the Tigris and the Euphrates do not form such a wide network of waterways as do the "five rivers" that give the province of my nativity its name (*Punj-ab*, five waters). Both are hot during the major part of the year, generally with cool nights. The soil is much the same. During the past generation a system of irrigation canals has converted millions of acres of desert in the Punjab into the finest wheat and cotton-producing land. Engineers are confident that the same result can be achieved in Mesopotamia. That country has, therefore, everything to gain and nothing to lose by being added to the Indian Empire.

From these questions of the future I return to recent events. In less than six months after the Imperial War Conference had ended, Mr. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, announced in the House of Commons that the Government had decided to permit Indians to hold commissions in the Army. That decision removed a grievance that for decades had rankled in the Indian heart, making Indians feel that they were not fully trusted by the British. But for the War, this wrong might not have been righted for years to come.

If the authorities show the requisite imagination and promptitude in translating this decision into action, the admission of Indians into the commissioned rank will exercise a tremendous influence upon the course of the great struggle. Although India has already sent across the waters more fighters and war-workers than any other Overseas unit of the Empire, yet the surface of her military resources has barely been



INDIAN LANCERS ON THE ARTOIS FRONT.

Drawn by Georges Scott.

scratched. Millions of men of fighting age, descended from heroes of bygone days, among whom the military tradition is very much alive, still remain to be called to the colours. The principal reason why it is impossible to make greater use of the Indian reservoir of man-power is that Indians of fighting classes do not know English, and English officers capable of commanding them in their own language are not available. Only by giving commissions to Indians with a liberal hand can adequate use be made of this great reserve of man-power.

A few months ago I had the opportunity of discussing this question with one of the greatest British Generals, General Sir James Willcocks, who headed the first Indian expeditionary force that fought on European soil. That redoubtable warrior stated that there is hardly a limit to the numbers of men that India can raise for this or any other war. He told me that I should be surprised if I knew in what corners of the country splendid fighting material was to be found. He said that there were many clans in different parts of India, especially in the Punjab, that were not classed as "martial," and yet they could supply large numbers of recruits for the army. He remarked that when you say a certain class is not a fighting class, you depress its spirits, and take any fighting qualities out of it that it may have. He was confident that if the British made it their business to develop the fighting qualities of Indians, they could raise from India one of the largest armies in the world—an army that would give a good account of itself anywhere on the globe.

It does not require a prophet to foretell that India's millions of fighting men, officered and led by their own people, are destined to play a far larger part in the defence of the Empire than has been assigned to them during the present struggle. Already excellent suggestions for the creation of a national army or territorial force in India have been made, and are said to be receiving consideration from the Indian authorities.

The organisation of India's military resources is bound up with the larger issue of associating Indians in the higher branches of Indian administration, and of making the Indian Government responsible to Indians, as is the case in the Dominions. The Secretary of State for India stated in the House of Commons that "the policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the Administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

To give effect to the pronouncement on British policy in India, Mr. Montagu, in collaboration with Lord Chelmsford, formulated a series of proposals which were published early in July for public discussion. It is as yet too premature to say what shape they will be given before they are introduced into Parliament in the form of a Government Bill.

Whatever may happen, the War has numbered the days of India's "Dependency-hood." Just when she will be raised to the status of a full-fledged Dominion is known only to the gods, but that period may be far nearer than most persons dream.

THE MOTHER-FACE.

AH, lonely, as the darkness falls,
The hutments huddle in the rain,
And lonelier men within their walls
Think back, think back to home again.

And, thinking with the thoughts that go
Across the chill and misty void,
I know, my heart, once more I know,
With olden gladness unalloyed,

All that you were and are to me,
And see again, through storm again,
The mother-face I love to see,
Through eyes, ah, misted not with rain!

ARTHUR THRUSH.

CAMOUFLAGE IN GLENGOLLACH

By J. L. DICKIE

Illustrated by Arthur Garratt

IN a dingy little shop, which seemed to be a mixture of joiner's workshops and secondhand furniture depository, Aaron Falkstein was busy giving the finishing touch to an old oak chest. Lovingly he gave it a final rubbing with a cloth as dirty and ragged as he was himself.

Presently he stopped and turned to an anæmic worker similarly engaged, but on a refectory table.

"Vilks, my poy, you are going to 'ave an 'oliday. You vill go to-morrow to Glengollach, Perthshire, Scotland, and you vill plant grandfather clocks. You know what is to do, and I need no more say. Come to me at my house at half-past nine to-night for instructions and money."

Henry Wilks brightened. He knew that his so-called holiday meant hard work, much tramping, many lies, with a nightly rest on damp beds in out-of-the-way clachans, but it meant fresh air and, to some extent, freedom for a few weeks.

At six o'clock he proceeded to his lodging in an obscure street off Tottenham Court Road, had a good wash, and, opening a small fibre trunk, drew out a neat dark grey suit, a soft white shirt, a quiet grey tie, a Homburg hat, and a pair of neat boots.

The transformation was wonderful and refreshing. But a few minutes before he had been an anæmic-looking, work-stained toiler; now he was a pale, somewhat interesting man of seven-and-twenty or thereabouts.

After a meagre supper Henry sought the Tube, which deposited him at Hampstead, and, after a walk of five minutes, rang the bell of Verdun Lodge. The maid recognised him, and ushered him into the smoking-room.

As he glanced around, he recognised for the hundredth time the masterpieces which came from the dingy little shop in Soho. The carved log box, the antique clock in the corner, the monk's table in the centre of the room, and the heavy carved chairs, he knew, had all received their finish at the hands of Aaron Falkstein, who in his Hampstead home was known as Godfrey Greer, "something in the City, don't you know," a liberal supporter of all things charitable in the district in which he lived—not a pious man, but wealthy, hospitable, and a good fellow.

Presently the maid entered with coffee, followed by Greer.

"Goot evening, little Vilks! Haf a cigar"—producing a box of strong Indian cheap cheroots from a cupboard.

Henry contrasted the cigar proffered with the fragrant Corona which his employer smoked, and mentally admired his moral courage.

Coffee was brought. Henry almost wondered if one of the cups held a cheaper liquor than the other.

"Vell, Vilks, you vill find at the Great Central Station, Glasgow, two grandfather clocks of great antiquity"—this with a chuckle—"and the price of each is fifty pounds. Don't forget that I am in search of the Rondeau table—period, Charles the First—of which there are two extant, one with Lord Rothschild, ze odder, goodness alone knows where. If found, it is worth two thousand pounds to *me*, and a leetle gratuity to you of, say, twenty pounds. You are not likely to find it in Glengollach, but it might even be there, so uncertain, so elusive, so curious ees this piece-hunting.

"I do not tink they haf peen reproduced, and so you are safe to buy, if you see—you know the description well—ze beautiful damascened inlaying, ze peeculiar twist, yet not a twist, not a roll, not a curve, but joost a *something*, of the legs. You haf, haf you

not, seen Lord Rothschild's specimen? You could not be mistooken it ees so?"

"I could not fail, sir."

"Goot! Here is"—opening a drawer in the massive pedestal writing-table and producing a roll of notes, "the necessary money for expenses. Be careful, do well, and your reward is certain."

It was Saturday night, and Henry raced home, and then to Euston, where he caught the night mail for the North. He reached Glasgow in the early morning, and, redeeming the clocks from the parcel office, proceeded by the slow train to Glengollach, which he reached at 11 a.m. He persuaded the stationmaster's wife to give him breakfast, and pumped her vigorously, and with good effect, as to the people of the Glen. Leaving the clocks at the station, he walked up the Glen by the purling Gollach River, until he sighted the cottage of Tinny McTavish, whom the stationmaster's wife had stigmatised as "a scoundrelly wee shargour," which expression Henry, though not well acquainted with the local dialect, took to mean that Tinny was not above a shady trick, if he could turn a penny, however dishonest, and keep clear of the police-court at the same time.

Tinny was mucking out the pigsty as Henry strolled up.

"A fine mornin'," quoth Tinny.

"Beautiful. A lovely spot you 'ave 'ere, Mr. McTavish."

"H'm, middlin'. Cauld i' the winter."

"Just so, just so. Have a cigar."

Henry had been supplied with some of the Indian cheroots, by way of ground-bait.

"Thank ye. A dinna mind if A do. But come in, bye; ye hae something on yer mind, laddie. We'll hae a bit dram, and ye can tell me."

This struck Henry as pretty astute, and he saw he'd have to get up early to get the better of Tinny.

In the parlour they talked, Henry leading.

"I'm a dealer in old clocks."

"D'ye mean auld *new* knocks?"

"Well"—smiling at the hit—"to be honest, yes, I do; and I have one I'd like to leave with you, to sell as an old family heirloom. See?"

"Oh, ay, A see. An' what's my share o't?"

"You must get fifty pounds for it, and your share is two pounds ten cash."

"H'm! It's no muckle. A'll tak five pun."

"Ten clocks a year mean a good deal at five pounds, and I'll supply you with what you require"

"Imphm! Bit supposin' the auld new knock were to get knockit down and bashed aboot or spilet?"

"Oh, that's not likely to happen, and it's my risk."

"It wud be on ma conscience," said Tinny sententiously, "an' A'll just gie ye three pun—that's aboot the worth o' t' knock—ta ease ma mind, in case onything happened till't."

Henry thought Tinny must be more fool than knave, after all. Or could there be more in this than met the eye? No, Tinny was a knave, no doubt, but with limitations.

"Well, just as you like."

Tinny went to a cupboard in the wall and produced three dirty, greasy one-pound Scotch notes.

"Noo, here's oor bargain. A tak the knock tae sell for fifty pounds, an' if A sell't, you gie me five pounds. Bit if the knock should come tae ony serious mischance—which Heaven forbid!—A lose ma five pounds, and ye're nae warse aff."

"You've a fine business head, Mr. McTavish."

"Na, na; a wee bit straucht i' the conscience—nae mair. Noo gie me a receipt for three pounds, for the purchase, sae tae speak, o' the knock."

This Henry did without misgiving. After all, how could this Scotch clown get the better of him, an expert in planting and selling new furniture as old?

Another dram sealed the contract, and he saw Henry disappear down the Glen.

Tinny spat vehemently and fairly shouted: "The dirty thief of a Sassenach! But A'll be the best man yet!"

Henry planted another clock in the neighbourhood, and returned to London, after visiting every likely clachan and sheiling, with a view to further planting operations.

A week later Tinny went to see his friend Jimmy McGlashan, who kept a little curio shop as a side-line to his joinery business in Ballaterach, and, spying a clock identically the same as Wilks's, except that the dial was brass instead of white enamelled iron, a bright thought struck him.

"Hoo muckle's the knock, Jimmy?"

"Ten pun tae a Sassenach body, fower pun tae you, Tinny."

"A pun ower-muckle. Three, an' it's mine."

"Weel, weel, tae an auld friend, Tinny."

McTavish produced the cash, wheeled the clock to the station on Jimmy's wheelbarrow,

and, borrowing a similar conveyance at Glengollach Station, soon had the new treasure side by side with the other, which had been sent up from the station.

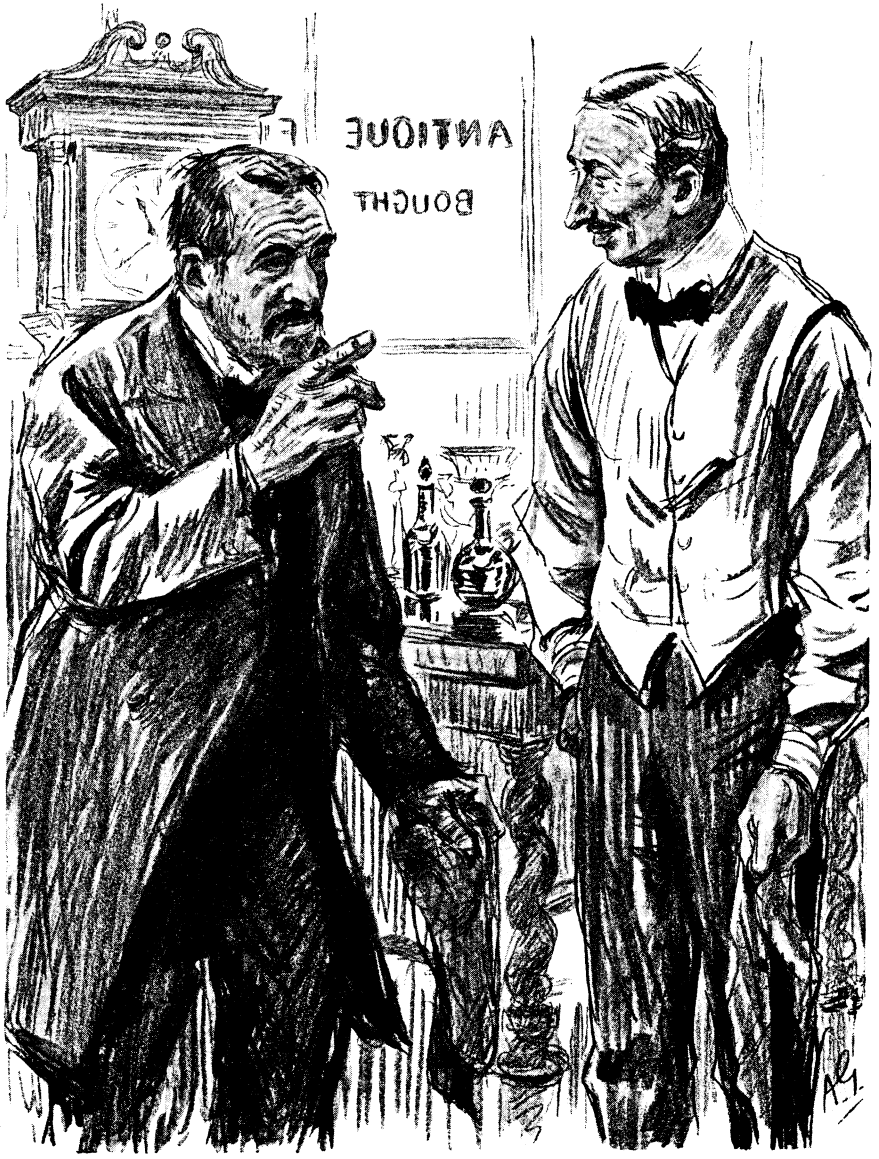
The summer season, when visitors from all over Europe came to see the famous Glengollach, was at its height, and many Americans and others put up in twos and threes at "The Peat Arms" in the village.

One day Tinny was about to make an onslaught on the trout, when a gentleman came up the little garden.

"Could you give me a drink of water?"

"Wi' pleesure, an' a 'cinder' in't, forby."

The American gentleman noted that slang had reached the nethermost hinterlands of Scotland, and marvelled.



"'You know what is to do, and I need no more say.'"

"A 'cinder'? I reckon I don't get you."

"'Cinder'? A dram o' whisky. What ither?"

"Ha, ha! Well, I'll be glad of it."

It may be mentioned that Tinny's own clock had been relegated to the garret under the roof.

Seeing the Wilks clock, the American began to feel his way cautiously.

"I reckon you've got a very nice old clock there, sir."

"Oh, just an auld bit thingy—a good timekeeper."

"A family heirloom?"

"Fut's that?"

"Oh, a treasure handed down from one generation to another."

"It belong't tae my great-great-great-grandfather o' ma mither's side, aboot saxteen-thirty. Some folks are terrible ta'en wi't. A gypit body offered me forty puns for't last week—said it was a deed-beat yin, whatever that be—but I wouldna cheat onybody, an' A wouldna sell it till him."

"Well, I'm looking for a really good old clock, and I know my own mind; so if I were cheated, which I know is not your intention, I reckon I'm rich enough to stand it. Now, I'll give you sixty pounds down, and call for it this afternoon."

Tinny gasped.

"Ye'll excuse ma gaspin', but it'll be an awfu' wrench partin' wi' the knockie that tickit a' ma forbeaws intae the warld and oot again, an' A lookit tae hear'ts tick on my ain death-bed some day. However, A'm a puir man, an' the rents here are terrible hich, sae ye can tak' it for the saxty pun."

The American paid up at once, and also bought a bureau for ten pounds, which stood under the window.

A trap from the inn called for the clock in the course of the afternoon, and Tinny replaced it by the one he had bought. He went to bed at night now an unhappy man. What if Wilks returned suddenly?

Next day he again visited Ballaterach, and bought an old white enamelled dial for a few shillings, and fitted it on the clock he had bought, which had a brass dial originally. He slept better that night.

During the ensuing week another gentleman called and had a long conclave with Tinny, and on the heels of his visit the carrier's cart deposited a large package done up in matting.

Tinny thought and thought, but could not see his way clear to get a decent excuse for smashing up the clock he had bought to replace Wilks's one.

That night a great hurricane arose, and lifted the thatched roof off the gable over the parlour, the rotten beam falling on and around the clock which had come from Ballaterach in the first instance, and the garret in the second.

Tinny shivered in his bed, and feared the whole cottage would collapse; but joy came with the morning, for he found the only damage was the gable end of the parlour, and the clock lay on its face amid a ruin of mortar and bricks. Seizing a large axe, he completed its utter destruction in a few seconds, and, with the torrential rain pouring in as it had done all night, he felt that Wilks could not have told the remains of the clock from his own.

Having had breakfast, he remembered the packet which lay in an outhouse, and brought it into the kitchen, where he unpacked it. It was a very old-looking table of beautiful design. Tinny deposited it under the window where the bureau had stood, and shook great handfuls of dust over it, until it was apiece with the other furniture in the room.

"Noo," said Tinny, as he gulped down an extra large dram of neat whisky, "yon manny can come, an' be bothered till him!"

Sure enough, Henry Wilks, who had just finished a tour on the borderland, and collected five hundred pounds as the result of many plantings, arrived at Tinny's sheiling as the latter was hoeing turnips on his little vegetable-patch.

"Good morning, Mr. McTavish!"

"Good morning!"—mournfully.

"You seem depressed. I 'ope nothing 'as 'appened to upset you?"

"Oh," groaned Tinny, "ye're juist the last man A wanted tae see!"

"But why—what——"

"Well, the han' o' God's been terrible heavy on me, an' a great storrum arose last week, wi' fearfu' thunder 'n' lightin'. A fairly thocht it was the Last Day, and was thinkin' of gaein' down tae the kirk-yaird tae see if ony o' the folks was risin', when, wi' an almighty crash, a pairt o' ma roof came in and c'd yer knock a' tae crockanition."

"My clock!" gasped Henry, seeing visions of a furious Falkstein.

"Aye, your knock—a' in bits. Ye couldna tell whether it's a kail-pot or a knock, an' me three pounds gone for ever an' ever!"

"Good 'Eavens!"

"Aye, come an' see the bitties o't." And Tinny led the way to the parlour.

Henry Wilks was horrified. It was quite genuine—the storm had smashed the clock, right enough—and he sank wearily on a chair.

Tinny fetched the whisky.

As he poured out two large glasses, Henry's eye wandered round the ruined room and suddenly caught sight of the table in the window. His little deep-set eyes grew bigger and bigger, until their dilated pupils seemed like luminous saucers.

"Heavens! The whisky—quick!"

Tinny, who thought Wilks had suddenly gone mad, seized his head and poured the fiery liquor, neat, down the Sassenach's throat.

"Ah, I'm better!" whispered Wilks feebly. "But now I'll go. Oh, it's unfortunate about the clock"—what did fifty clocks matter now?—"but never mind it. It'll be a blow to you, this storm; and your landlord, I suppose, won't help you to repair the cottage, will he?"

"De'il a penny o't."

"Well, I'm sorry for you. Now, if you had anything else to sell, I'd buy, perhaps, just to help you, Mr. McTavish."

"Oh, A've naething worth the buying."

"What's that little table under the window?"

"Oh, just a bit table A had lyin' in the garret this twenty year, and pit it there tae replace an auld burio an American gentleman bocht last week."

"Well I want to continue business with you, so I'll offer you fifty pounds—not that it's worth it, but just as a friendly help in trouble."

"H'm," said Tinny, "that's queer! The professor o' something or ither frae Aberdeen was here twa days syne, an' said: 'Ma man, that's valuable. Dinna pairt wi't under hunders o' pounds.' But, of course, he was lauchin' at me—tho' ye niver ken—so I'll nae sell't the noo."

Heartily damning the professor, Henry sighed.

"Well, I'll be honest, McTavish—it's worth two hundred pounds. Forgive me. I did try to cheat you, and I'll give you two hundred pounds down now!"—with a scream.

"Five hunders my price, an' no' a penny less."

The sweat stood on Henry's brow, but he dare not lose the great Rondeau table, for such it seemed.

"Done with you!" shouted Henry, and gave him the money in notes. It was the last penny he had. It was a frightful stake, and if—oh, Heavens, he couldn't be mistaken!—it was right, it meant a partnership and a future.

He made Tinny wheel it to the station, after he had carefully packed it. Tinny returned home sober, for a wonder, dispatched one hundred pounds in a registered letter next day to the gentleman who had left the table with him, and, taking the first boat to Canada—a long-cherished project—was heard, as he leant over the taffrail while she cast moorings at Greenock, to murmur: "It taks mair nor *ae* Sassenach, an' an airly riser at that, tae get the better o' ae Scotchman frae Glengollach."

THE GREEN SMOCK.

BETWEEN grim walls of London stone
You heard the crooning country call;
To dusty floors, like toys outgrown,
You let your desk-forged shackles fall.

Green Sussex took you to her heart,
And clothed you with her meadows' hue;
The racing shadows on her Downs
Traced out for you the world anew.

Fair mornings woke you from your dreams—
Such dawns as only Sussex knows—
Amid lush grass you stood to watch
The dewdrop tremble on the rose.

In such a setting toil grew sweet;
Earth drew her veil of clay aside;
From patient beasts you learned a lore
To city girlhood still denied.

And so your green smock grew to be
A friendly presence in our street,
Like pleasant music in our ears
The passing of your quick, brave feet.

And as your slender shoulders bear
Their burden of the brimming pail,
Your green gown and your gallant grace
Rebuke the courage that would fail.

ETHEL M. HEWITT.

WHEN THE YEAR WAS YOUNG

By A. M. BURRAGE

Illustrated by Balliol Salmon

THE wind, which bent the delicately-burdened trees and sent swift argosies of clouds to some invisible post beyond the north-eastern horizon, blew Pamela Duncombe's hair about her brows, and tried to trip her with the hem of her own skirt.

It was a rollicking wind, warm and fragrant, and bearing along with it a hint of rain. On its way it had caught up the rich, warm odour of hawthorn blossom. It was like the spirit of Spring rioting over the land and singing a song of youth to the staid inhabitants of Rangbury.

It was not necessary to live at Rangbury to know what its society was like. The sensitive could almost detect its atmosphere by merely passing through it in the train. It contained an ancient cathedral, a small public school, and a garrison. The garrison attracted a number of retired Army men, and the Church was strongly reinforced by the school, of which most of the masters were in Holy Orders. Unmonied members of the upper classes, mostly old maids, came there to die, because the place was cheap and its residents could be classified as "nice."

It was not exactly an exhilarating environment for the young and healthy. Here were Convention—spelt with a large C—stagnation, moth and rust. The young people bore the stamp of their elders, and seemed to fall in love and then marry with a polite but weary consciousness of doing the right thing. A new law of Nature ordained that every parson's son should marry the daughter of a retired colonel. The shadow of Mrs. Grundy at her knitting enveloped that dark blot on the green of an English shire.

Pamela, breathing deeply, leaned to the wind as if she were sinking into the arms of some shadowy lover. Something within her strove to answer the call that came from far down the west. In the house she had complained that she wanted air. What she really wanted were Romance and Adventure, those twin children of Youth and Spring, to exult without restraint in the glory of her own youth.

Pamela was considered by her parents and by many local matrons to be a dangerously unconventional young person, one with ideas, and even habits, too modern for Rangbury. Her mother had protested strongly against her taking the note that she now bore in her hand, although the distance between her home and Colonel Dewson's house was little more than a hundred yards. A maid, it was presumed, was far more fitted to brave the terrors of nine o'clock at night, and could so easily have slipped across with that invitation to come and make up a fourth at bridge. But Pamela had insisted upon going, declaring that she needed a breath of air. She generally gained her way, but even her smallest victories were won at the price of bickerings and arguments.

Well, Spring was in the air to-night, and the wind wanted to be a boisterous playmate, a lover who bustled and teased her even as he kissed.

"Here's Spring come," she quoted to herself, "and at night one makes up bands to roam the town and sing out carnival."

She smiled wryly to think of her own set in Rangbury exhibiting any joy over the mere coming of a season. Across the years she felt a sisterly love and understanding of poor Brother Lippo, who could not resist the patter of little feet, the sweep of lute-strings, laughs and whifts of song. They knew how to live, she thought, those old Florentines.

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Into her dreams there came always the same lover, whose face she never allowed herself to see. But he was big and laughter-loving, he had seen the world and was yet unspoilt by it, he saw and did unexpected things. He was rather clumsy and made *faux pas* in a lovable way that was all his own. Vaguely she decided that he must be ugly rather than otherwise. In most essentials, indeed, he was the antithesis of the type of young men she knew. Just now she needed him rather badly—this dream-lover from beyond Rangbury.

The swift patter of a dog's feet suddenly made her turn, and a black form whisked past her.

"Hullo, Mr. Binks!" she cried. "Who told you to come with me?"

Mr. Binks was a large black retriever, a little past his first youth, but still skittish in his maturity. He ran with a certain *abandon* which was little more dignified than actual frisking. He stopped a few yards ahead and turned to sniff the legs of a man coming in the opposite direction. Then he wagged his tail feebly, as one who greets an acquaintance rather than a friend.

"Good evening, Mr. Trout," said Pamela, bowing. "You're quite late to-night," she added, as Mr. Trout pulled off a tweed cap and came to a halt.

Young Mr. Trout was home on vacation from Cambridge. He was going to be a little soldier or a little clergyman—Pamela was not sure which. Probably a clergyman, she thought, since he had gone up to Cambridge.

"Been playing golf," explained Mr. Trout. "Fluffed my driving horribly in this wind. Dined at the club-house. I say, Miss Duncombe, seen anything of the fire?"

"No," said Pamela, surprised. "Where?"

"At the school. I heard the big outside bell go a minute or two back."

"I hope it isn't a serious outbreak," said Pamela.

"I hope not. I always said school-house and Coulson's 'ud burn like tinder. And in this wind! Thank goodness, the boys won't be in bed yet; it's only about ten minutes after prayers. I'm going to leave my clubs at home, and then go round and have a look."

Pamela seized the opportunity to say a hurried good night. Turning, the moment after, to see what had become of Mr. Binks, she was startled to observe a certain decoration attached to, or, rather, held in place by, the collar of Mr. Trout's coat. Her face suddenly convulsed. The white card bore, in very bold type, the one word "SWEEP."

Probably, it seemed, Mr. Trout was blissfully unaware of being labelled. Pamela's lips made a movement preliminary to calling out to him. Then she thought: "Why should I?" She had always regarded young Mr. Trout as "rather a sweep." But who—who in all Rangbury—had thus labelled him?

She went on, laughing. Somebody at last, no matter in what taste, had perpetrated a joke—somebody had dared to drink of the cup of spring madness. But who could have done this thing? It seemed to Pamela almost certain that an alien hand had been at work.

Her mind was still occupied with this phenomenon when she reached the gate of The Firs, where Colonel Dewson lived. A man had just turned away from the gate, and Pamela was about to enter, when the singular behaviour of Mr. Binks held her to the spot. Mr. Binks had trotted up to inspect the stranger, and now gave vent to sounds of canine joy, making repeated and friendly onslaughts, his tongue lolling, his tail waving in a veritable fever of joy.

"Why," cried a voice, "it's Mr. Binks! Dear old Binkie!"

The voice was strange to Pamela, and she averted her eyes in some slight embarrassment. It is a little awkward sometimes not to be acquainted with the friends of one's dog. Her embarrassment was short-lived, however, for her gaze, straying to the left, encountered something which drove it away. A large card affixed to the gate-post bore, in the most arresting characters, the legend "APARTMENTS."

Pamela stared as one who doubted the evidence of her own eyes. The end of the world, the sudden arrival of an inhabitant of the moon, a second Great Flood—these things were improbable enough, but they had not that quality of unlikelihood suggested by the idea of the Dewsons letting apartments. She broke out helplessly into laughter. The old order of things had gone out on the wings of that wild, delightful wind. Rangbury seemed suddenly to have cast away its dulness and its self-conscious sanity.

"Good old Binkie! Binkie remembers me! Good old dog! But Binkie's missus doesn't."

Pamela looked at the stranger, who, meeting her gaze, pulled off a tweed cap and made her a little bow. He was young; faint lines of mirth were traced around the corners of his mouth, and he had the eyes of a man

who laughed often ; he was pleasant-looking, but few would have paid him a higher compliment.

Pamela regarded him, a little troubled, a little angry with herself. Stranger he was to her, but something in the look of him set her groping after something just beyond the reach of her memory.

"I feel I ought to know you," she said, "but"—she laughed awkwardly—"I'm very sorry."

"It is for me to be sorry," said the young man humbly. "What did I tell you, Mr. Binks ?"

As he spoke he opened a paper bag which he was carrying, and took a step towards Pamela.

"'Twas in the month when lilies blow," he quoted, "And clouds are highest up in air, Lord Ronald had bought a lily-white dough-nut To give his cousin Lady Clare. Slight imitation of Lord Ronald. Will you have a Rangbury dough-nut, Lady Clare ?"

Pamela declined, quivering with half-suppressed merriment. To be offered dough-nuts by a stranger outside a house where Colonel Dewson was advertising his desire to let lodgings seemed to her like a page out of some fantastic story.

"Well," said the Stranger, "then Mr. Binks will."

Mr. Binks did, and somehow contrived to make a single mouthful of it. The Rangbury dough-nut is a local speciality, and differs from all other dough-nuts in that it is larger, flatter, stickier in substance, and contains treacle instead of jam.

"I bought these," explained the Stranger affably, "not because I wanted to eat them, but out of sheer maudlin sentiment. Now, Mr. Binks ! Down, old thing ! Down ! Oh !"

Mr. Binks, having dealt with the dough-nut, resumed his welcome, and inadvertently snatched out of the Stranger's hands the bag of dough-nuts and a small loosely-wrapped parcel, which strewed its contents on the path.

Pamela, thinking of the consequences of unlimited dough-nuts to Mr. Binks's health, stepped forward hastily and picked up the bag. As she did so, the contents of the parcel forced themselves upon her notice. They were a number of assorted cards which advertised the letting of rooms, the tuning of pianos, and a number of other modest callings. Pamela was not generally quick at making deductions, but suddenly found herself enlightened by one too obvious to be ignored.

The Stranger began to pick up the cards, murmuring their inscriptions.

"'Bed-Sitting Room to Let,' 'Mangling Done Here,' 'Wardrobes Bought.' Where's—— Excuse me, but have you seen anything of 'We Are Frying To-Night' ?"

Pamela choked over a negative answer, and the Stranger hastened to reassure her.

"All is well," he said in a tone of relief ; "I have it here, after all. I shouldn't have liked to lose 'We Are Frying To-Night.'"

"It would be a pity," Pamela murmured in a low and shaken voice. She glanced towards the card adorning Colonel Dewson's gate-post. "I suppose," she added, "you did—that."

The Stranger smiled blandly, making no admission or denial.

"Wonderful places, these penny bazaars," he said. "I got all these cards for a penny each."

"From sheer sentiment, I suppose ?" Pamela said, without stopping to wonder at herself.

"Yes—of a kind. I say, shall we go round and stick up a few more of these ?"

"We ?"

"Oh, Pamela—I don't know you well enough to call you Miss Duncombe, so Pamela—don't pretend it wouldn't amuse you."

"But——"

He had the effrontery to take her arm, tucking it confidentially inside his own. She looked at him amazed, and suddenly found herself giving and receiving comradeship.

"Oh," she cried, "I wonder which of the two of us is the more insane ? Let's go down to the school and see the fire."

"The school ?" he repeated. "Fire ?"

"Yes ; the fire-bell went a few minutes ago."

"Oh, that ! I'm sorry to disappoint you, Pamela, but that was only me—or, rather, I."

Pamela's eyes widened with laughter and amazement.

"You again ?"

"An Old Boy's privilege," he murmured. "You know Sergeant Stenby—by sight at least. He will go straight to the shed where they keep the engine. When he opens the door, a bag of soot will empty its contents on him. Meanwhile all the boys will be getting out of dormitory windows and escaping by means of canvas chutes. We can go down and see Sergeant Stenby—he'll



"'I don't remember you,' Pamela whispered."

be worth seeing—and the little lads saving themselves, if you like. It'll be a long business. I expect most of the Lower School will rush back and escape all over again."

Pamela inclined her slim body and found herself unable to make any comment.

"Or," suggested the Stranger, with the air of one seeking to arrange conventional amusement for the evening, "shall we seek out the abode of Doctor Lasson? 'Mangling Done Here' was positively printed for him."

The point was left undecided, but Pamela, dumb with amazement at her own acquiescence, suffered herself to be led away.

II.

For a long while the pent-up forces in Pamela's nature, irritated by suppression, had been working themselves up towards an explosion. If the normal state of affairs had continued, there would have arisen at the least a family crisis which might be

vulgarly described as "a jolly old shindy." Her meeting with the Stranger acted—rather drastically, perhaps—as a safety-valve.

For a full hour she revelled in doing things that no young woman privately bred ought even to want to do. They plastered the walls and gateways of the intensely respectable with pieces of cardboard which seemed to denote a sad fall in the social scale of both houses and occupants. Pamela remembered that she had always admired Archdeacon Hamblin's knocker. The Stranger, having asked her to "keep *cave*," faithfully procured it for her.

"The only drawback to these revels," said that remarkable person, taking a step back to survey "FURNISHED LODGINGS," which adorned the middle of General Massonby's front gate, "is that one can't be present to observe their effect. One really ought to ring the bell and ask to see the rooms."

"Unfortunately, I know him," Pamela said.

"So do I—a fellow of infinite jest. The stars that met in his horoscope made him of curry, old port, and Anglo-Indian liver. He will be vexed when he hears that two people have come to see his abode with the object of renting part of it."

"But——" began Pamela, remembering, however, that most of the things she had said began with that fateful little word.

The Stranger took her persuasively by the hand, as one leads a small child to the sinister premises of the dentist.

"We shall only see the servant," he said. "When he—or she—goes to call the General, we can hare off."

Pamela was about to plead that the servant would recognise her, but she remembered having heard that the General had lately taken into his employ as butler a young man born and bred beside Lake Geneva.

The house stood a few yards back from the road, and at a tangent to a semicircular sweep of carriage drive. Pamela found herself being led round one-half of this semicircle, and marched up the four stone steps to the front door. There a handle depending from a chain exhibited a cordial invitation to pull, of which the Stranger took full avail.

"Shall we have the bell-pull?" he inquired, preparing to exert more energy. "It's rather posh, and it'll go with the Archdeaconal knocker."

"No!" gasped Pamela. "S-sh! Somebody's coming!"

There was a sound of curtains parting somewhere within. A brighter glow shone through the frosted panels of the door. A moment later the young Swiss confronted them.

"I see," said the Stranger pleasantly, "you have some rooms to let. If the hour is not inconvenient, my wife"—a slight but deferential gesture towards Pamela—"and I would like to see them."

A troubled look, like that of some zealot suddenly confronted by a doubt, appeared on the servant's face.

"Pardon, sair," he murmured, "I did not quite unnerstand. Ouhat iss rooms-to-let?"

The Stranger smiled at Pamela.

"Hear me break into voluble French. *Vous avez*—er—*le* accommodation *pour* guests *en pension?*"

The Swiss regarded him as one regards foreign matter in soup served in a hitherto trusted restaurant. He had been brought up in an atmosphere of Cook's tourists, but it was still in his simple nature to be surprised by the eccentricities of Britishers.

"Sheneral Massonby reside 'ere, sir," he said severely.

"That," said the Stranger, "is all the reference I shall require, thank you."

"But this is 'is 'ouse. Private! You *compree*—private, sair? The Sheneral, he not keep a *pension*. No!"

"I rather think he does. If you will be so good as to look at the card attached to the gate, it will force you to the same conclusion."

"Vhat gate?" demanded the servant, in a tone of pained incredulity.

"Either," returned the Stranger. "I think," he added below his breath, "I remembered to put one on each."

The Swiss brought his gaze to bear on Pamela, as if hoping to find light in her direction; but she kept her head bent and remained silent.

"Look here," said the Stranger a little brusquely, "it will save a lot of time and talk if you go and fetch your master, or"—more winningly—"you may jodel for him, if you prefer it."

At that moment a heavy footstep sounded from the inner hall, and the next a voice, used to galvanising a whole brigade across a furlong of open country, inquired: "What is the trouble there, Franz?"

"A lady and a gentleman, sair. Zey vill 'ave it zis is a *pension*. Zey insist!"

From the inner hall there came a noise as

of many saucepans boiling simultaneously. Then, to Pamela's horror, the face of General Massonby appeared round the corner.

At that psychological moment the Stranger moved his arm with a jerk. Something hurtled through the air and struck its mark with a dull and flabby thwack. Then he drew the door towards him with a slam, and bundled the not-unwilling Pamela down the steps.

"Come on—we'll have to leg it now!" he whispered.

But heavy footfalls sounded on the path beyond the garden, the unmistakable footfalls of an English policeman.

"This way!" hissed the Stranger; and they sped along a narrow grass border and turned the corner of the house. As they did so, they heard the sound of a heavy body projecting itself down the steps, and the General's tender baritone raised in a hue and cry. The policeman halted.

"There's a summer-house round here!" Pamela whispered frenziedly, and, detaching herself from the Stranger, disappeared into a shrubbery that flanked the side-walk. He followed her into a large rustic hutch where the darkness was like a pall. There they crouched close together on a bench, quaking and listening.

There was plenty to hear. The General had reached the gate by then and seen the card attached to it. Sounds—happily unintelligible at that distance—were proceeding from him suggestive of an antediluvian monster being deprived of its young.

"It's all right," the Stranger whispered presently. "They'll never look here. By the time our Helvetian friend has told him all, and the policeman has assured him that we didn't go *that* way, they'll decide that we've escaped *viâ* the garden wall. Good job we lost Mr. Binks. He'll find his way home, and he would have been incriminating."

"He would," Pamela agreed, a certain aloofness in her tone. "May I ask what you threw at the General?"

"Dough-nut," said the Stranger tersely. "They're invaluable! Better than a sand-bag."

"I wish," said Pamela bitterly, "I'd never seen you!"

"And yet," murmured the Stranger, "you're amused."

"Amused!"

"I heard you sniff just now. That meant you were trying not to laugh."

"I don't want to laugh—now." Suddenly she seized his arm. "Oh, if I *do* begin to laugh!"

"S-sh! Hold on until the coast clears. I remember thinking you so plucky once, when you didn't cry. Be plucky now, and don't laugh."

"Tell me," she whispered, "who you are."

"Oh, you've forgotten! I knew you would. I was at the school here—a boarder. I learned to hate this pestilent little town for its narrowness and snobbery, its greasy self-satisfaction, its well-bred aloofness from anything resembling living and feelings, and I learned to love——"

"Then why have you come back?" Pamela interrupted hurriedly.

"To find you," said the Stranger, with the least of a quaver in his whispering.

"You mustn't——"

"Oh, listen! I was the son of a business man, pitchforked into a school where nine boys in ten came from, and were destined for, the Church or the Service. When I went out in the town, I could see a little subaltern or a little curate in every well-clothed boy-child being wheeled in a pram. Sometimes I went out to tea with day-boys, whose parents, having discovered my antecedents from their sons, treated me with that kind of reserve that raises the devil in a boy. Your people—well, they didn't ask me to tea at all, you know. Forgive me, but—I represented Commerce where only two or three of the professions were tolerated."

"I don't remember you," Pamela whispered again, and there was something like humility in her voice.

"Ah, you were different to all the others; you dared to be unconventional even as a kid of thirteen. Do you remember, eight years ago, when you went rambling by yourself on Beacon Hill, and sprained your ankle, and how a boy from the school found you and carried you to a cottage?"

She drew a quick breath.

"Are you—Peter Mayo grown up?"

He chuckled. "Peter Mayo—to what extent grown up you must judge for yourself. Do you remember how you always bowed to me when I met you out with your mother, and how you always wanted to stop and talk, but were not allowed?"

"Ye-es."

"And do you remember how, when I was carrying you, you felt so tired and panic-stricken, and you rested your head on my shoulder and laid such a soft, hot little cheek against mine?"

"Perhaps—yes. I was such a child then, wasn't I?"

"Yes, you were such a child. You couldn't know, for instance, that you had started a dream and set me in pursuit of it. I was nineteen then, but I saw somehow the budding woman in you. You couldn't know that you walked amongst the stars and called to me—called to me! I said, having a boy's right to dream: 'I'll make my fortune and then come back for her.' I've—come back," he concluded simply.

Pamela sought refuge in silence.

"I haven't made my fortune, of course," Mayo continued cheerfully, "but I've made something. I'm going to buy a cottage somewhere right down in the West—a big, lime-washed cottage within sight and sound of the sea. And I've got some guns and fishing-tackle, and a boat, and some jolly dogs. Mr. Binks 'ud like my dogs. I cultivated him, by the way. For years he's associated me, in his mind, with Rangbury dough-nuts."

"Has he?" Pamela murmured, finding her speech now that the ground seemed safer.

"I'm glad," Mayo continued in the same level whisper, "that I met you to-night. This is one of my mad nights. I'm not always like this, you know; and at other times I'm shy—at least, I should be shy of you. But when I arrived—I only got here to-night—I couldn't resist stirring up some of these foster-children of silence and slow time. It has been fun, hasn't it?"

"Um!" said Pamela doubtfully.

"And—about what I said?"

"What did you say?"

"Oh, you know! Help me, Pamela. My diffidence is coming back. We've been good comrades to-night—don't pretend not to know what I mean."

Pamela sought refuge in the remark that every girl makes at least once in her lifetime—

"But—I don't really know you yet, do I?"

To her surprise, he expressed himself in agreement with her.

"I suppose you don't, really," he confessed. "But, Pamela, I've been more frank with you than I ought to have been. I've thrown my hand down on the table. I want you to let me have my chance. I've always been in pursuit of that dream you started. I still hear you call to me from the stars. In pity lean down to me, if you can. Give me the chance of letting you know me."

She was silent.

"Will you, Pamela?"

There was another pause. Then a voice very close to his ear said: "That cottage of yours—will there be lots and lots of wall-flowers in the garden?"

"Lots and lots."

"And a big hollyhock outside the front door?"

"Rather!"

"I love hollyhocks," said the small voice.

There was another pause. Then the Stranger stirred a little.

"It's very dark here," he whispered. "Something touched my cheek very lightly then. I wonder if it were a tendril of jessamine from the window? But it reminded me of—of something that happened a long time ago."

Pamela's voice sounded very close when she answered, but the reply came very low and muffled

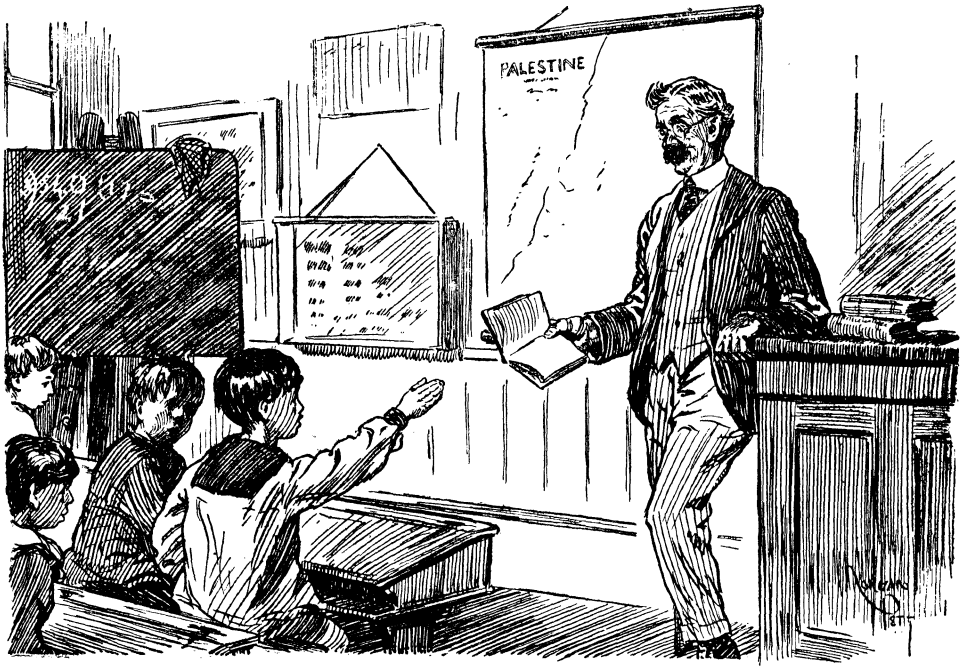
"I expect," she faltered, "it was only jessamine."

A CALM MORNING

THIS morning, after a wild night
Of war between the earth and skies,
Came half-awake, with a new light
Of wonder in her eyes.

"She has discovered peace," I said,
"The deep content that, after strife,
Hears in the silence overhead
The still small voice of life."

RICHARD CHURCH.



CHANGE OF NAME.

TEACHER (during history lesson): The soldiers who fought in Palestine were called Crusaders.
SMALL BOY: Please, my father's fighting in Palestine, but they call him a sniper.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

BACHELORS.

By Edwin H. Gomes.

THE old proverb "Give a dog a bad name and hang him!" has a great deal of truth in it. Bachelors have had a bad name given them, and everybody has something nasty to say about them. Periodically we read letters in the newspapers, written evidently by people with plenty of leisure, saying that bachelors ought to be taxed. These wicked bachelors, we are told, live in rooms, and so escape paying rates. Why should they not pay their fair share of rates and taxes? They are a useless clog to the nation. They live selfish, useless lives, and they ought to be taxed and made to contribute something to the upkeep of the country. As for the "Mother of Fourteen Daughters," her opinion of the bachelor is not fit for publication. He is mean and not trustworthy. Did not a bachelor lead her fourth girl to suppose he was in love with her? And now the poor girl is quite heart-broken. She is going into a decline — the doctors say so, etc., etc.

The bachelor is made a convenience of by hostesses, but how few of them have a good word to say of him? If one of the invited guests to her dinner-party on Thursday has influenza on Wednesday evening, all the hostess has to do is to write to some bachelor friend to fill the gap, and he never refuses to do so, if he can possibly oblige her. The bachelor is always ready to come at a moment's notice, and so save the hostess the trouble and expense of getting a hired guest from some universal provider. (By the way, what sort of hired guests do they send out on these occasions, and is the charge for each half a guinea?) But does the hostess ever thank the bachelor for helping her out of a difficulty? I trow not.

I have heard hostesses say that bachelors are ungrateful, and make no return for the dinners they are asked to. The bachelor does not repay hospitality with hospitality. Go to, thou unreasonable hostess! Get thee to a lunatic asylum! Thou speakest as one without understanding. Does the hostess expect the bachelor to say: "I live in lodgings, and dine in a small room in which there are only four chairs, but I shall not be happy until I have repaid your hospitality, and have you all to dine with me. So please come in to dinner the day after to-morrow, all of you. I won't take a refusal. There are ten of you, but what of that? My landlady's cooking is execrable, but then you will, I am sure, put up with that, and not 'look a gift-horse in the mouth.'

There are, I believe, only three sets of spoons and forks in this establishment, but we can get over that difficulty by those who have forks not having spoons, and so on. Oh, please come! I am sure you will enjoy it. We can manage very well. Some can sit on the floor, others on the stove in the kitchen, and the rest can take their places on the stairs—very draughty stairs, but I am sure you will not mind that."

I believe the real reason why so many blame the bachelor is because he remains a bachelor. He goes out to teas and dinners and garden-parties, and yet remains a bachelor. That is his unpardonable sin. Ungrateful man! But just think for a moment of his side of the matter. He cannot afford to marry, and it would be unkind of him to ask a girl to marry him and live a hugger-mugger life in a perpetual atmosphere of debt. The invitations to teas and dinners and garden-parties that he gets are not of his own seeking. In nine cases out of ten he would be glad to refuse them if he dared. Is there any pleasure in giving up a comfortable chair at his club to sit on the edge of a Chippendale chair and drink weak tea out of a cup a little bigger than a thimble? And, mark you, he has to exercise his brains all the time. He must talk in an intelligent way about music he has never heard of to a girl he does not care for. He must listen to people singing—very often out of tune—and must at the right moment say "Thank you," as if he had really enjoyed it. If you only think the matter over, you will agree with me that the bachelor ought to be rewarded for the noble way in which he does his duty.

My experience of bachelors is that they are very nice people, as a rule. The only bachelor whom I cannot stand at any price is the bachelor in love. He is quite impossible. He is a terrible bore. He will talk for ever about the virtues of his lady-love, and he wants you to admire her as much as he does himself. But if you did as he wished, and fell in love with her, he would want to murder you. So you must not lose your head and fall in love with the "angel." This is generally not difficult to avoid doing. The "angel" in most cases is a very commonplace sort of girl.



AN UP-TO-DATE VALUATION.

"Your new maid seems an excellent girl."
"Yes, she is worth her weight in—in—margarine!"

A well-known actor was standing on the steps of his club when a man approached and asked: "Will you kindly tell me if a gentleman belongs to your club with one leg named Walker?"

"I don't know," said the actor, "but I'll find out. What's the name of his other leg?"

The scene was a station on the Harrow line.

Passenger, pointing to incoming train, inquired of workman: "Is this an 'Arrow train?"

"Not very, mum," was the reply; "I've seen narrower ones in some of the Tubes!"

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THE WINDSOR



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although unknown 50 years ago, is one of the most popular throughout the whole world to-day, but at the same time there are still a great many people who have yet to learn that the word is a registered trade mark and the exclusive property of the Chesebrough Manufacturing Co., of New York, London, Moscow, Montreal, etc. **"Vaseline"** was coined by Mr. R. A. CHESEBROUGH to immortalise his discovery of the substance which he named **Petroleum Jelly,** and in order that the future generations might benefit, and the sufferings of the afflicted alleviated, he registered **"Vaseline"** as a distinguishing mark, to **protect the public from dangerous imitations and adulterations.**



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AMERICAN TROOPS ON THEIR WAY TO THE FRONT IN FRANCE.

From a drawing by J. Simont.



AMERICAN TROOPS SERVING IN FRANCE IN CAMP IN THE AISNE DISTRICT: STANDING TO ATTENTION AS THE FLAG PASSES.

From a French official photograph.

AMERICA AS THE DECISIVE FACTOR IN THE WAR

By E. D. USHAW

WHEN Russia—"whose head," as the poet says, "lies on the Caucasus and her feet on the North Pole"—melted out of the Allied ranks into eighteen more or less chaotic States under the German heel, the outlook for civilisation was extremely grave. As Prime Minister, Alexander Kerensky told the Associated Press of New York that "Russia is worn out; the disorganised state of life has reacted upon the masses psychologically, and we are incapable of further effort."

We need not here stay to count the causes of this, but the fact remains that a largely illiterate people were discouraged, and succumbed at last to Bolshevik promise of a new idyllic day. So matters drifted to the ghastly "Peace" of Brest-Litovsk, where the German envoy, General Hoffmann, grimly reminded Lenin and Trotzsky that "We are sitting on Russia's chest."

So the long-dreaded Bear—the *bête noire* of Bismarck's policy and warnings—was laid low, together with all the Slavic *protégés*. The Hamburg-Herat route, across Europe and Asia to Persia and our Indian Empire, was now open to German *Macht*. Hindenburg and Ludendorff were free to withdraw fifteen hundred thousand soldiers and fling them upon the Franco-British forces in the West. "In my judgment," Mr. Lloyd George said, when reviewing the situation in the House of Commons, "our disappointment has been attributable entirely to the Russian collapse."

Meanwhile the United States — the hugest democracy in the world, numbering 110,000,000 people, with industrial and material resources beyond calculation—had entered the War. How this continent of peace was roused to "Humanity's War," as President Wilson called it; how the crusading flame spread from the Atlantic to the Pacific

Coast, and from the Great Lakes down to the Gulf; how the American Navy was quadrupled, and ten million men marched to the booths for military service on Registration Day—these are historic facts which must move and thrill the dullest imagination.

Our own Admiralty has paid tribute to the success with which America's transports have been convoyed, having regard to the submarines and mines in lurk, and to the part played in that feat by the British Navy. "Judged from the standpoint of a seaman," said Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, our First Sea Lord, of this transport feat, "it has no parallel in history."

Nothing was more curious to watch than the gradual veering of German opinion over America's "wooden sword"—the toy lath that lay at President Wilson's side in those Berlin cartoons which showed "the Professor" tapping out his "chameleon Notes" on a typewriter to the invincible *Herrenvolk* over the water. The Germany of to-day sings a very different tune. America is now the "land of unlimited resources," and our enemy's last hope is to gain a military decision before these resources can be fully deployed.

"We are staking the game upon America's aid," M. Clemenceau told the French Chamber. "Behind and beyond all these things," said Mr. Lloyd George, in an eloquent survey of hopeful signs, "we have the great Republic of the West. Her instinct has taught her that Freedom is in real jeopardy, and now you can hear the tramp of her men and the hammering of her anvils. The Central Powers are dealing—and they know it—with a people that has never felt defeat—a land of infinite resources, where all conditions make for enterprise and endurance."

In short, the New World steps in to redress the balance of the Old, and its timely intervention is undoubtedly due to the personality of President Wilson, whose triumph extorts admiration even from the enemy. "No one would refuse homage to this genius of mankind," said Baron Burian, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, "and none would refuse his co-operation." Now, President Wilson's problems were incomparably greater than any which confronted his twenty-six predecessors at the White House. The America of George Washington's day contained fewer people than the city of Paris, and they were homogeneous in race—over ninety per cent. of them were British. President Lincoln's Union had a smaller population than England has to-day, and five Englands could be comfortably stowed in the Lone Star State of Texas.

Then began the immigration from Europe. No such migration was ever known; it was on the way to two millions a year before the Great War came. The America of President Wilson had become indeed a racial melting-pot, as he himself stated in his many and earnest appeals to "a composite and cosmopolitan people." The 110,000,000 souls in the United States comprise white men and black, red men and yellow, and brown—these last inhabiting New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas.

There are altogether about a hundred nationalities in the total population, out of which total 33,000,000 are of foreign origin, and 13,000,000 foreign-born. Five million more are unable to speak, read, or write English; there are 2,000,000 non-naturalised aliens of military age. This amazing welter was by no means Americanised; there was too much living in rings of nationality—Italian and Greek, Magyar and Pole, Russian, Scandinavian, and the rest. New York was the most foreign city on earth; the continent at large had 1500 newspapers in foreign languages, with a total circulation of 11,000,000 copies.

These facts show the hugeness and complexity of President Wilson's task. And by tradition Germany was highly esteemed in America, for reasons which President Wilson has stated in more than one weighty speech wherein he strove to discriminate between the German people, and the "furious and brutal power" which governed them.

The arrogance of *Deutschtum* in the United States during the neutral time is all but incredible. The German-American Alliance, of 3,000,000 members, under Dr. Hexamer, of Philadelphia—a *decoré* of the Kaiser—preached open sedition. In hundreds of schools of the Middle West, German was the only language taught; there were pro-German mayors, professors, and political leaders, as well as potent forces in the Federal Congress, baffling the movements of American defence and hindering the Allied cause.

Meanwhile the two Embassies of the Central Powers, under Count Bernstorff and Dr. Constantin Dumba, waged a "war" of their own with marvellous unconcern. The doings of Boy-Ed and Von Papen, who hired bombers and thugs, the propaganda of Bernhard Dernburg and Heinrich Albert,

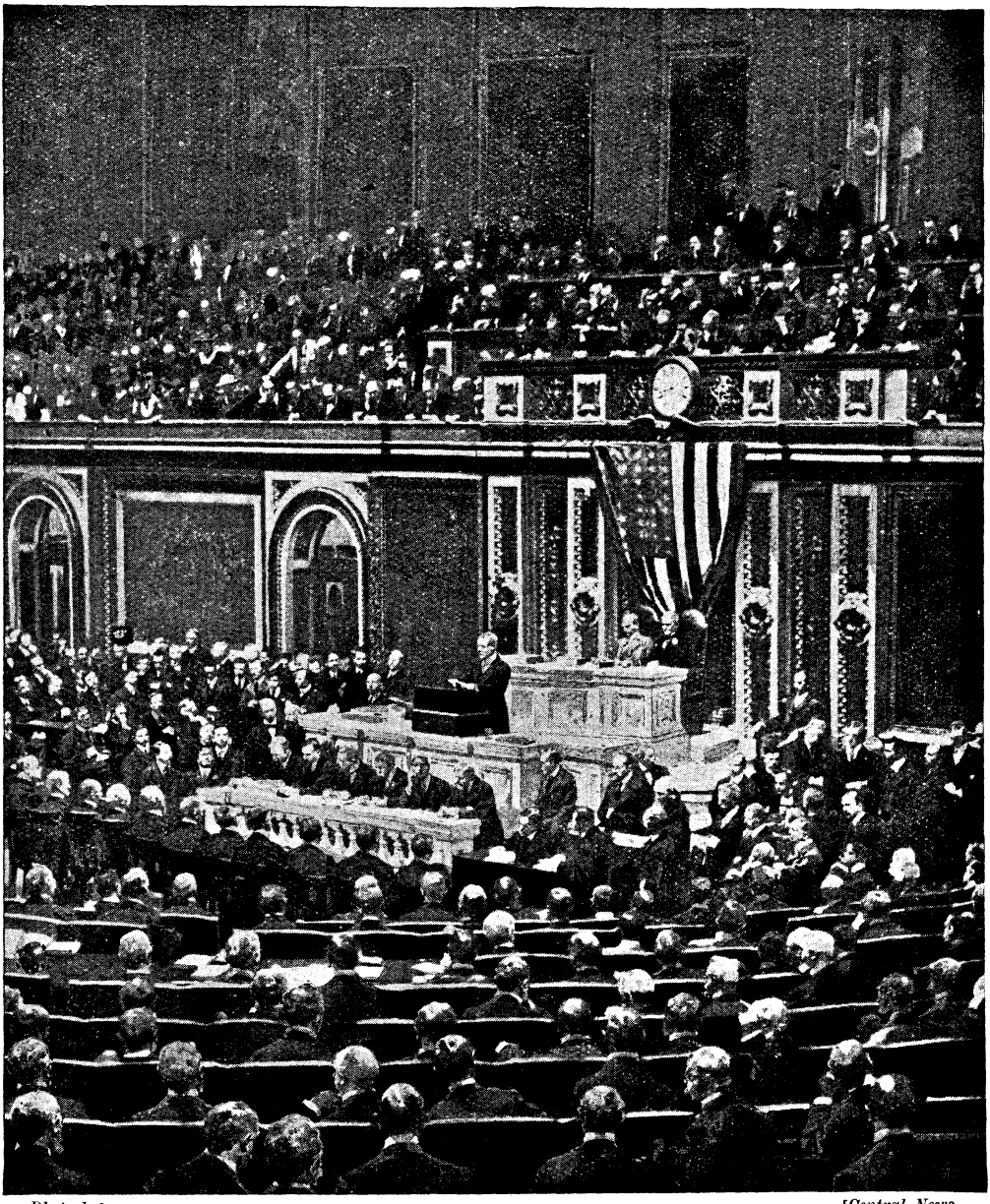


Photo by] [*Central News.*

PRESIDENT WILSON MAKING HIS HISTORIC SPEECH CALLING UPON CONGRESS TO DECLARE WAR UPON THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT.

the plots of Von Rintelen in Mexico, the Indian intrigue of Herr Bopp in San Francisco—these give some idea of the state of things. Never will America forget the affronts put upon her between the sinking of the *Lusitania* and that of the *Laconia*—which last was the "overt act" which determined the momentous rupture.

The Eastern States, always more in touch with the outer world, were justly furious. Most of the intellectuals, as well as weighty statesmen, such as Theodore Roosevelt and Elihu Root, cried out for war. But President Wilson knew that the vast empire of the West—to which he owed his second election as the President of "prosperity and peace"—was not yet fully roused to the issues. Yet the State Department was well informed throughout, as we know from its periodic revelations. At last came news of the Zimmermann-Eckhardt letter, proposing a Mexican invasion of the United States, with

German arms and money, and a possible Japanese backing. Thereupon the West and South-West flamed with wrath, and President Wilson had a united America behind him—not exulting at all, but in calm and deadly earnest, as the Allied Missions found.

Mr. Balfour confessed himself "haunted" with the magnitude of this New World rising. M. Viviani and Marshal Joffre returned to Paris to tell their people that America was "in it to her last man and her last dollar."

Well might Mr. Asquith pay tribute to President Wilson's "sagacious and inspiring utterances," which had at long last thrown the decisive weight of this New World into the liberating scales of a world-war. "It was the first time in their history," Mr. Asquith pointed out, "that a great democracy organised, not for war, but for peace, and

Osage nation rolled up to the Indian Agency in their Ford cars and signed on for service. A Cherokee full-blood was already flying in France since 1914, serving with the Lafayette Squadron. President Wilson sent a missionary of his own to Europe in the person of Colonel E. M. House, and arranged for a great speeding-up of ships and food-production; of naval output and munitions of war; above all, in the dispatch of transports full of trained or partially-trained soldiers, who completed their military education in England or France, where, as everybody knows, there are now schools of scientific war, ranging from gas to heavy guns, and from bomb-throwing to trench raiding.

President Wilson's decision to brigade his fresh, alert millions with our own veterans and the French was a master-stroke of far-sighted policy. It takes but three months



Photo by] [*Topical.*

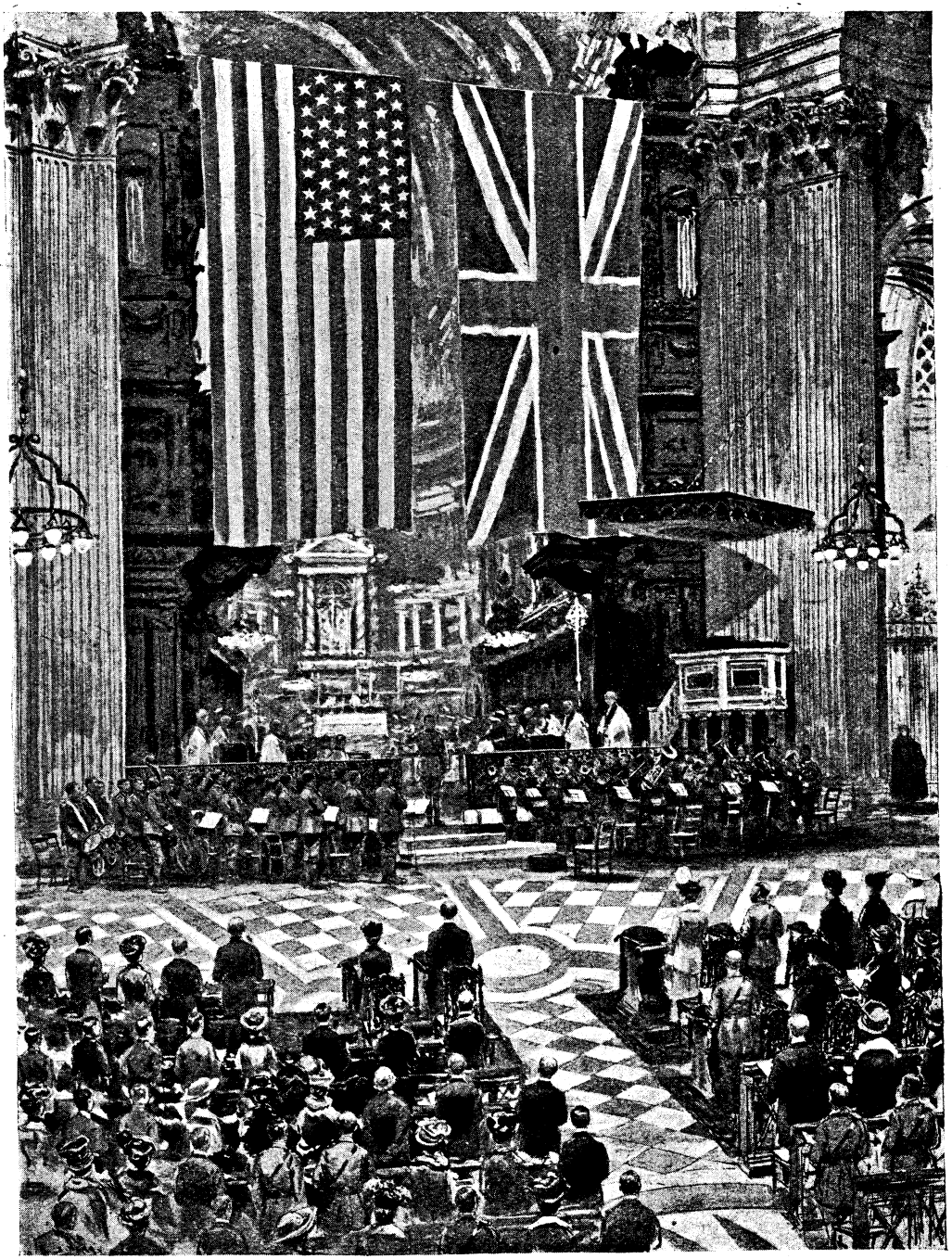
AN AMERICAN REGIMENT MARCHING PAST BUCKINGHAM PALACE: KING GEORGE SALUTING AND SALUTED BY THEM.

separated by thousands of miles from the theatre of action, had been invited, and had resolved, to take up arms in a quarrel in which it had no scintilla of territorial or material interest, and no bond, direct or indirect, of Treaty obligations. To embark upon—and, still more, to carry through—such an enterprise, the first condition of success was national unity—unity of conviction, unity of spirit, unity of effort. That condition President Wilson secured. It could only have been secured by a rare combination of insight and of patience, and that he did secure it would always give him an undisputed title to a high place in the gratitude and reverence of those who love Right and cherish Freedom."

First came military conscription, and ten million Americans, out of a possible twenty millions of militia age—eighteen to forty-five—rallied to President Wilson's call with enthusiasm. Even redskin chiefs of the

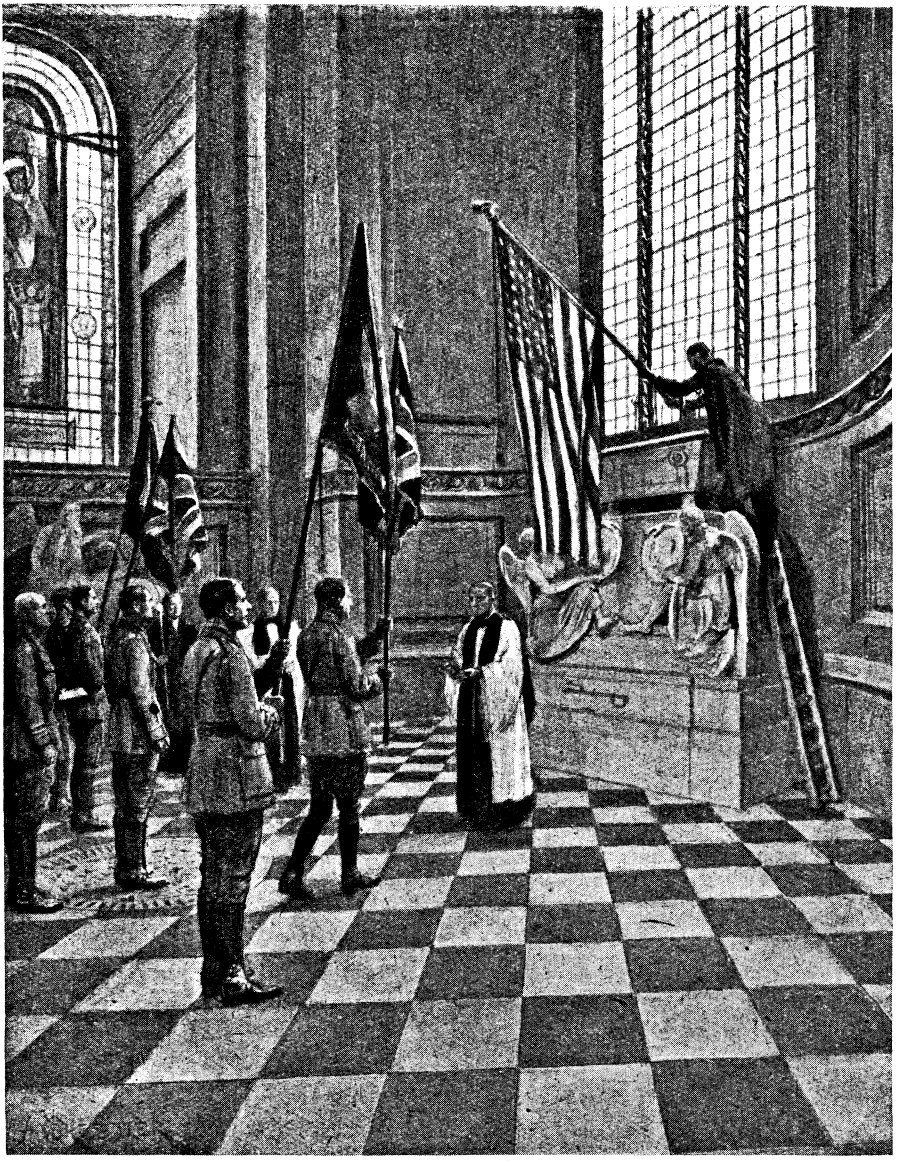
to train a passable soldier; but as we go up the scale of units, the problem of knowledge and co-ordinated arms grows far more complex. The perfect battalion is not easily made. Then comes the brigade, and after that the division; here all arms—the infantry, artillery, engineers, and aircraft—must be in perfect co-operation. And America entered the War with no heavy ordnance, no experience of a chemical and mechanical war, and not so much as a single squadron of aeroplanes.

"We are novices," General Pershing told his people with soldierly frankness. "We must begin with the A B C." It is safe to say that no more apt pupils ever hurled themselves into training; and each month sees America's legions in France increasing at a great rate. "People say," the President remarked in his dispassionate way, "that we shall need five million men. But why limit our Army to five millions?" "When all



THE AMERICAN NATIONAL ANTHEM SUNG IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL AT THE SOLEMN SERVICE IN CELEBRATION OF THE ENTRY OF THE UNITED STATES INTO THE WAR.

From a drawing by S. Begg.



THE AMERICAN FLAG HUNG IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL: THE CEREMONY IN THE NORTH TRANSEPT WHEN THE FLAGS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA WERE DEPOSITED THERE BY THE AMERICAN LEGION OF MEN WHO ARE SERVING IN THE CANADIAN ARMY.

From a drawing by A. Forestier.

other nations," our War Minister, Lord Milner, said, "if not actually spent, are at any rate feeling the strain most painfully, America comes fresh into the field with great physical, financial, and other material strength."

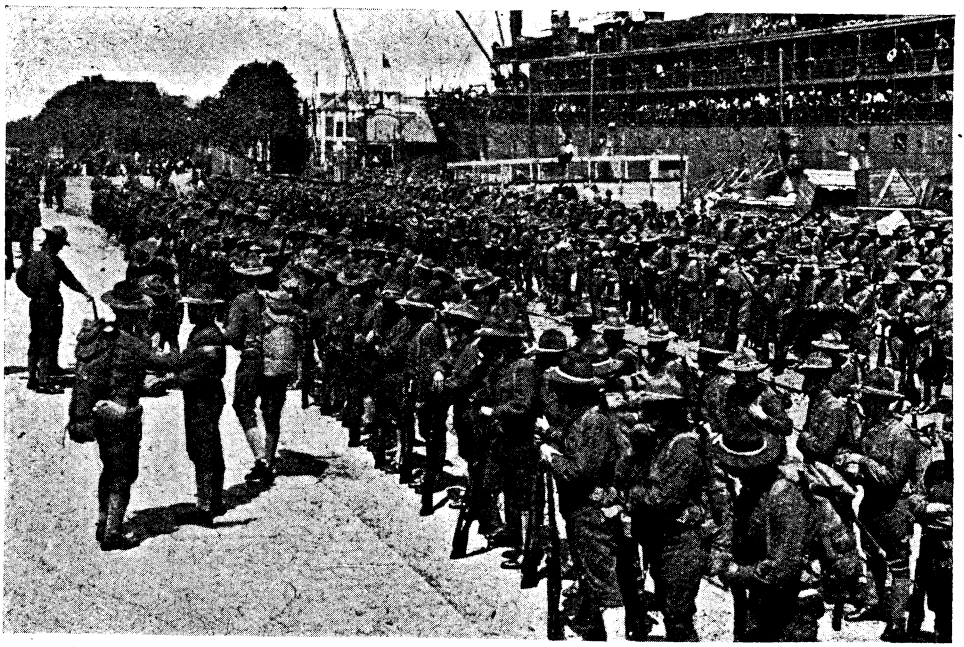
She will put ten million men into the fight, if necessary. And behind this man-power stands American industry, now mobilised for war with a zeal and on a scale which are as yet but dimly apprehended in our own country. Shipbuilding yards have sprung up like mushrooms from Eastport down to the Florida Keys, and from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Slope, where the hives of Seattle, Tacoma, and San Francisco vie with New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, three thousand miles away on the other ocean. There are ships of wood, of steel, and of concrete; there are fabricated and standardised ships, and new "invisible" and torpedo-proof designs.

Hundreds of thousands of hands are employed, and Labour stands like a rock behind the President in Democracy's War.

Millions of dollars are voted for the housing of these workers. One army, 15,000 strong, was let loose on the smashed German ships, and £6,000,000 was spent upon repairs, chiefly by electric welding. Foremost among these vessels was the *Vaterland*, which is by far the hugest ship afloat, and now—by the irony of war—carries hosts of American troops to fight against the very Power that built her. Over a hundred German steamers, totalling

allocated to this work of defeating the German submarine and supplying America's Army in France, as well as renewing the merchant marine of the country, which fell into decay after the Civil War.

By 1920 Chairman E. N. Hurley predicts that a million men will be employed on ships alone, and America's flag will be represented on the seas by 25,000,000 tons of shipping. The launching records are altogether without precedent. Big prizes are offered to men in the yards, and the golden rule of these workshop soldiers is "caulk and don't talk!" In twenty-seven



AMERICAN INFANTRY FORMING UP AFTER DISEMBARKING AT A FRENCH PORT.

Photograph supplied by Illustrations Bureau.

600,000 tons, were interned in American harbours, and these were got ready for service, either as cargo-boats or transports. Add to these, Dutch requisitions and neutral charters, and we have 1400 ships of 7,000,000 tons under the Federal Board.

Over seven hundred slipways for steel and wooden ships of all grades—from freighters and oil-tankers to barges and harbour tugs—are now competing with one another round America's enormous coast-line of 21,000 miles. Commandeered ships add yet another 1,715,000 tons; the Emergency Board's building programme calls for 1856 more vessels, totalling 13,000,000 tons. The vast sum of £1,000,000,000 has been

days the steel ship *Tuckahoe* was built, and a fortnight later the cargo was put on board. On Independence Day 125 new vessels were launched from the rival yards, and Mr. Lloyd George cabled: "Heartiest congratulations on this magnificent performance." Director Schwab's ideal of six weeks from keel to cargo was long since bettered, and now the equivalent of one 10,000-ton steamer is delivered every working day. Such is the power of industrial America in her fullest stride.

There are dry-land and blue-water schools for hands to man these ships. Recruiting for the Navy is on a similar scale, and it received a vigorous additional motive from

the recent long-distance blockade attempted by German submersible cruisers off the American coast. When war was declared, the Navy had a *personnel* of 64,680 men; now it numbers 150,000, not counting the Reserves, the Hospital Corps, the coast-guards and volunteers.

It is no secret that American Dreadnoughts are operating with our Grand Fleet, or that U.S. naval forces have long been working in the Mediterranean, in conjunction with our own. The naval lessons learned are sent home to America by extraordinarily able officers, such as Vice-Admiral Sowden Sims, and Secretary Daniels has billions of dollars to carry them into practical effect. New naval yards are built for oil-driven capital ships mounting 16-inch guns. Old yards are enlarged, so as to take battle-cruisers of immense size and power, as well as lesser types—destroyers by the score, submarines, seaplane carriers, and "chasers" of a new type.

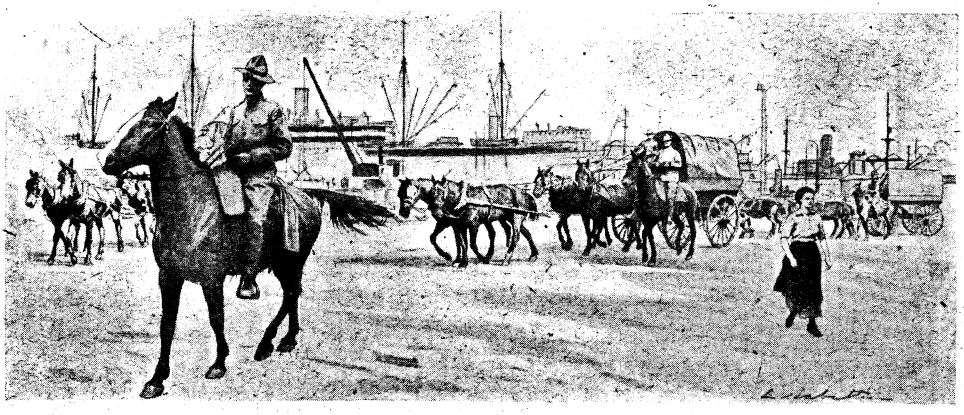
Twenty training camps for the Navy and forty-eight more for the new National Army arose like magic in waste places. These are model cities, well drained and electrically lighted, and built to last through the longest of wars.

Congressional appropriations are mere "caravans of noughts," such as two thousand millions for the Navy alone, and thirty thousand millions in all for the coming year. Well over £120,000,000 was voted for the aircraft arm. Ten thousand woodmen, under Colonel Disque, were let loose in the forests of Oregon and Washington to procure spruce for aeroplanes. Whole crops of flax were bespoken for linen.

It is a virgin continent which has joined us, rather than a country as we understand the term. The forty-eight Sovereignties of the Union had to be roused to this War; each has its own two Houses of Parliament, its own laws and a State Army, known as the National Guard. All the Governors are now heart and soul with President Wilson in his mighty mission. "You are fighting for the liberties of the world," Mr. Lloyd George called from his car in France to the troops of the United States around him—men of the "first million," the advance-guard of a host which, beyond all human doubt, will finally quench the German lust of domination.

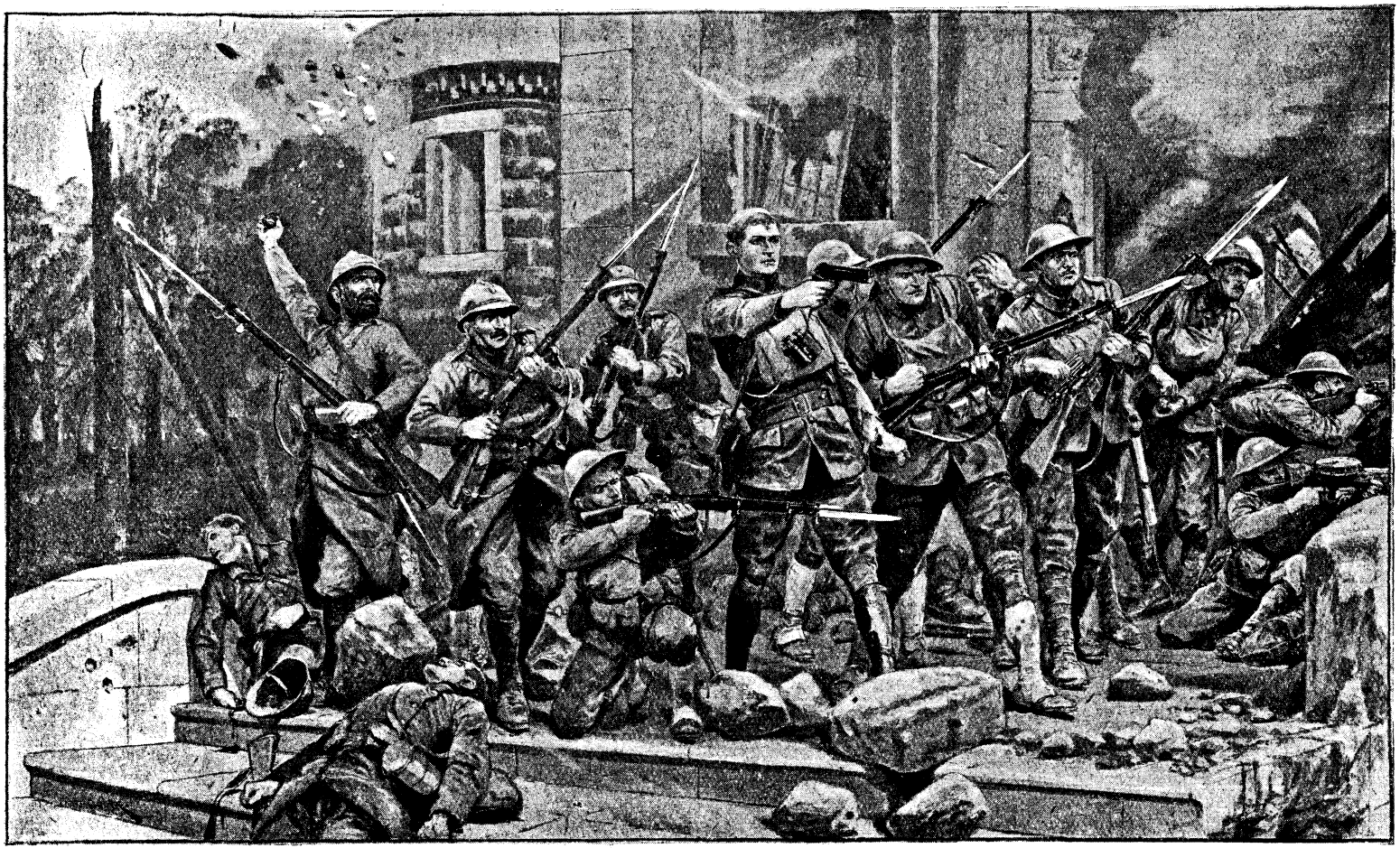
And the spirit of the American people looms behind all these formidable forces. Millionaires of Wall Street, mining magnates, railroad presidents, and industrial princes, with one accord left the business game which has allured them for generations, and came flocking to a new and humming Washington with offers of service. Great ladies of Newport and New York forsook their palaces in a way familiar enough to us, but quite revolutionary in the United States. Harvard and Yale—the Oxford and Cambridge of America—became military camps. The women's colleges—Vassar and Smith, and Holyoke—sent out thousands of Red Cross workers for the home and foreign fields.

Then the famous Liberty Loans wrought a financial transformation, the campaign of publicity being conducted with all the newspaper genius of America. Nor must one forget the embattled farmers, whose latest report shows nearly a thousand million



AMERICAN CAVALRY DISEMBARKING AT A FRENCH PORT.

From a drawing by L. Sabattier.



AMERICAN, BRITISH, AND FRENCH FIGHTING SHOULDER TO SHOULDER.

From a drawing by R. Caton Woodville.

bushels of wheat available. "Food will win the War," Mr. Hoover impressed upon his people. "So go back to the simple life—simple food, simple pleasures, simple clothes. Work hard, pray hard, and play hard. Do it all courageously, for we have a great victory to win."

As a result of this appeal, America's grain exports rose from 120,000,000 bushels—the three-year pre-War average—to 405,000,000 bushels; the meat and fat products were over 1,000,000 lb. in excess, and so on through the whole gamut, not forgetting bacon and sugar. The value of American shipments to the Allies for the past year totalled £280,000,000. Now, there remains the economic weapon, which, in America's case, vies with her hosts of armed men, her naval forces and merchant shipping, her aircraft and munitions of war, from Tanks and farm tractors to guns and shells, barbed wire, trenching tools, and the rest.

For example, take cotton, which is a vital staple alike in peace and war; it is the basis



HONOURING FALLEN AMERICANS AT THE FRONT: THE BURIAL OF THE FIRST AMERICAN SOLDIERS KILLED IN ACTION IN FRANCE.

Drawn by S. Begg from an official photograph.



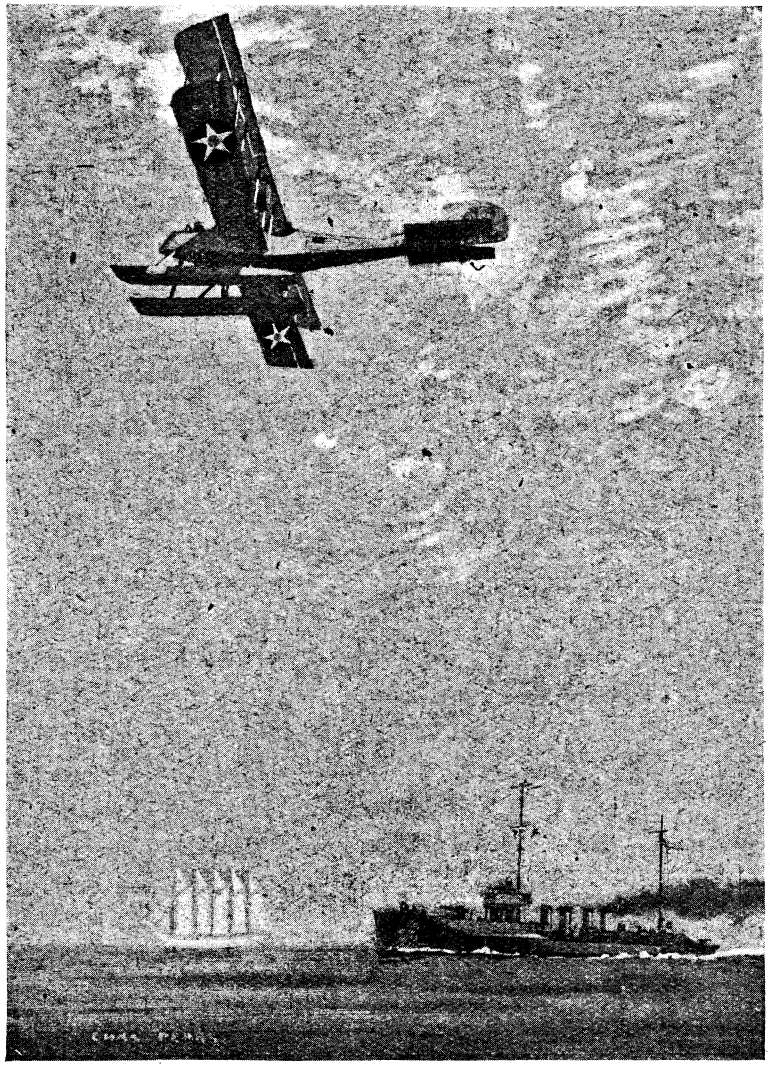
PRESIDENT WILSON.

Photograph by Brown Brothers, New York.

of all high-explosives. India produces cotton, so does Egypt and Central Africa, but over sixty per cent. of the world's cotton comes from the Southern States of America.

In 1913 the world's coal production was 1478 million tons. Of this, 570,000,000 tons were mined in America, and 380,000,000 in Great Britain; here, then, were two-thirds of the world's supply. Of pig-iron, 79,500,000 tons were produced by the two foremost industrial Powers, with nearly three American tons to every one of ours. Steel showed 76,000,000 tons—31,000,000 American and 9,000,000 British. More than half the entire copper output was mined in the United States, together with two-thirds of the world's fuel oil.

Is it any wonder, therefore, that Imperial Germany has changed her tune from the smiling "What can America do?" of 1915 and the first *Lusitania* note? Dr. Helffe-rich, a former Vice-Chancellor of the Empire, has told his people plainly that "unless the final peace restores our freedom of work and enterprise, we are crippled for an immeasurable period."



AN AMERICAN NAVAL AEROPLANE, WITH THE U.S. IDENTITY STAR BADGE, SCOUTING FOR A U.S. DESTROYER.

Drawn by Charles Pears.

No victory on land, this economist declares, could ensure ultimate success; no Hindenburg genius or German bravery in the field. "For always England and America have a terrible weapon against us in the sea-blockade and the withholding of raw materials." Of course, all that talk of German "dumping" after the War was utter nonsense. German trade is all but dead, as an official organ like the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* has lately bewailed. "Out of 1700 spinning and weaving mills, only seventy are still running at full pressure; in the boot trade 1400 factories have been amalgamated into 300. In the oil industry fifteen factories have been carved out of the 720 works which existed previously. As for the silk mills, the number of spools has

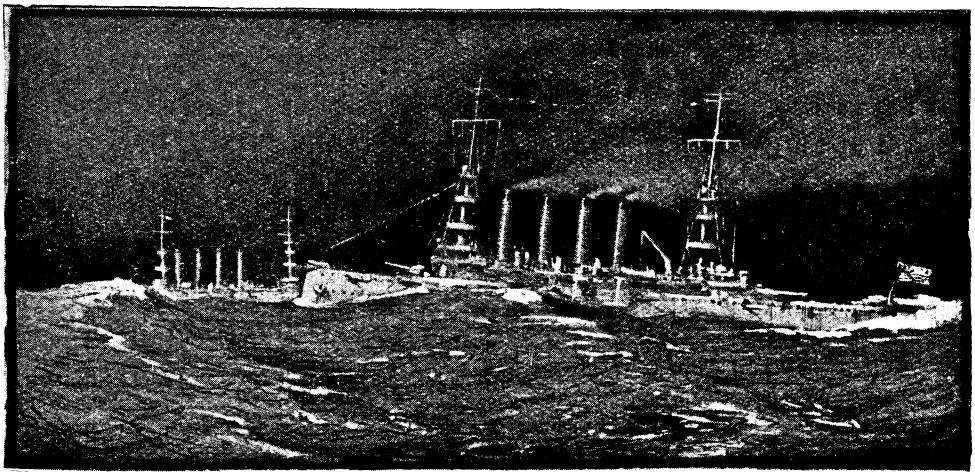
dwindled from 45,000 to 2500." So much for the economic weapon, as felt in one corner of industrial Germany.

The problem of war copper is so acute that roofs have been stripped, church bells, door-knobs, statues, and even kitchen utensils scrapped, in order to obtain an adequate supply. Germany's own output of copper never exceeded 150,000,000 lb., as against the 2,392,000,000 lb. of the United States. Every student of the German press knows that the question of world-commerce (*Welthandel*) after the War is as anxiously discussed as the titan battles in France. Walther Rathenau, of the huge electrical concern, Friederich Naumann (of *Mitteleuropa* fame)—even Grand Admiral von Tirpitz himself, the father of the German Navy and author of the U-boat policy—are all alarmed about the swift development of America's might in all directions, and her new demands when the guns cease firing.

"The underwater weapon should have been used much earlier," Von Tirpitz said at Dresden. "America's entry is decidedly unfavourable for us, morally and otherwise." All the intellectuals say the same; naval and military critics express dismay over the immunity of American transports, now pouring hundreds of thousands of men into their new base in South-West France, where new networks of American railways are being built on a great scale.

"The United States," says a typical German writer, Major Endres, in the *Münchner Nueste Nachrichten*, "are becoming more and more the decisive military factor of the War." Only a year previously these sapient fellows were asking how could America transport any army at all through the U-boat war zone, and the cartoonists of Berlin had a merry time depicting President Wilson's "dream," which was an aerial passage.

The Americans were slow to anger. Their "mixed bunches" are to-day the admiration of the Franco-British forces. All are blood-brothers now, all inspired with the same stern purpose which President Wilson has voiced. "The supreme moment of history has come," that great leader told the hundred millions behind him. "This intolerable Thing, of which the masters of Germany have shown us the ugly face, this menace of combined intrigue and force, which we now see clearly as the German power—a Thing without conscience or honour or capacity for covenanted peace—must be for ever crushed."



AMERICAN LIGHT CRUISERS KEEPING THE SEAS.

From a drawing by a naval officer.

THE LADY'S WALK

By A. M. BURRAGE

Illustrated by Balliol Salmon

"WHAT you want to do," said Socks, "is to discover her father's hobby, and tackle him about it."

"Whose father's hobby?" I demanded. "And why should I tackle him?"

Adrian looked across at Socks and sighed.

"One of the first symptoms of love in the young lover," he remarked, "is a feigned obtuseness when the object of his affections is alluded to."

"Socks," said I, "was talking about somebody's father's hobby. Whose hobby, Socks?"

"That," said he, "is up to you to find out."

"If he happens to have one," put in Adrian. "He doesn't golf, I know. We might look him up in 'Who's Who.'"

Socks shook his head.

"Wouldn't help a bit," said he. "You've allowed the public to suppose that your amusements are cricket and swimming, whereas——"

"Whereas," said I, anxious to score first, "whisky and auction bridge would be more correct."

Adrian flicked a spent match at me.

"Shut up, when we're trying to help you! Socks is right. In this case the only way to approach the lady is through her father, if you *won't* let Eleanor or Gladys work the thing for you. If the father has a hobby, that is his vulnerable spot. To look at him, I should say he collected stamps. Hang about in the smoke-room, wait your chance, then pounce on him and talk philately."

"I never use such language."

"Tell him," said Socks, "when he returns to town he *must* come and see your Twopenny Blue Mauritius."

"Ricketts would have a fit if I started keeping pets."

"Or your Four-cornered Triangular Cape, wood block, with winch fittings and usual offices."

"It just amounts to this, old thing," said Socks, with the air of a man who had been married twelve years instead of twelve months, "we want to see you married and settled down."

"Settling down," said I, "is a term applied only to matrimony and sinking ships. Of the two——"

"Now," interrupted Adrian, "don't pretend to be cynical. We can't have our Archie talking like that, especially just now. From your eyes, old bean, we have beheld fair, speechless messages. The way you've looked at that girl when you thought we weren't noticing!"

"Adrian," said I, "it's quite time you ran away and got dressed. Same with Socks. You can neither of you do up your own ties, and I'm always kept waiting—eating out my heart for want of something better—about half an hour after everybody else has gone in to dinner. I suppose you wore ready-made ones before you married."

"Mine used to cost only fourpence-ha'penny," said Socks. "But they weren't really economical, because they always came unstuck in the laundry. Adrian used to clean his white waistcoats with benzine. It caused him to throw his head well back, so that people admired his carriage. Girls, however, preferred to admire him at a distance. Their eyes used to water when they came too close to him."

Adrian smiled indulgently and lit a cigarette.

"Look here," said he to Socks, "we're allowing this blighter to lead us into frivolous side-issues. Archie, my lad, it just amounts to this. We're stopping here another four days. We'll give you two in which to make the acquaintance of that girl. If you can't—or don't—do it in that time, we shall have to call in the services of Gladys and Eleanor. You are a man of sorts, and we respect the confidence you haven't given us. We know how unpleasant it is to be chipped by women-folk. But if within forty-eight hours you cannot work this thing for yourself, the girls will have

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to do it for you, and you will never hear the last of it. At present they suspect nothing, or, at least, they pretend to. A word from us——"

"Go to your room," said I, "and write out five hundred times 'I must not meddle with the affairs of others'"

Half an hour later the five of us met at dinner. We had a large table in a corner of the old baronial dining-hall, close to the dais, where once the noble and the fair used to take their meals. Now the dais was occupied by a weary quartette which, armed with string instruments, did their best to make dining a disagreeable duty rather than a pleasure. From my seat, however, I had an uninterrupted view of a girl in white, with the loveliest profile in the world. On the whole, it wasn't such a bad table.

This evening Eleanor was full of suppressed excitement. I could see at a glance that she was holding something back from us. She let us have it during the long wait between the disappearance of the soup plates and the arrival of the fish.

"Socks," she said, "have you ever seen a ghost?"

"Several," replied Socks. "I used to keep one."

"Gladys," said Eleanor, "will you kindly treat your husband to one of your looks, and ask him not to be frivolous?"

"But I did keep one," protested Socks—"for milk, you know."

"I said 'Have you seen a ghost?' Not a goat."

Socks begged her pardon, and added that even in his unregenerate days he had never let himself go to that extent.

"The hotel," said Eleanor, "is supposed to be haunted in several places."

"It ought to be if it isn't," said I. "In the Middle Ages, when it was a castle owned by a family notoriously lax in morals, with a *penchant* for promiscuous homicide, a lot of unpleasant things must have happened here. It 'ud be strange if there weren't a Weeping Drummer or a Headless Horseman, or something."

"Personally," said Adrian, "I prefer lady ghosts."

"You would," said Gladys.

"The one I am alluding to," Eleanor continued, "is a lady."

"I didn't know you'd alluded to any particular one," said Socks.

"Well, the one I was going to allude to, if you hadn't all interrupted, is a lady."

"*Was* a lady," I suggested mildly.

"*Is*," said Eleanor. "If she is still an entity, she——"

"I meant she has probably lost caste in the place where she is, if she is still doing any haunting. Better call her a person."

Eleanor glared at me and sighed pityingly.

"I say, old thing," said Adrian, "why not keep it to the end? A ghost story ought to go well with the *bombe glacée*."

"I am not going to keep it until the end. You know the laurel walk that leads into the south drive? That is called the Lady's Walk. I can't tell you the legend attached."

"Thank you for sparing our Archie," said Socks. "It probably isn't at all proper."

"I can't tell you the legend," Eleanor went on doggedly, "because I don't know it. I only know that a female person in white is supposed to walk up and down, wringing her hands."

"Will you kindly wring your hands," said Adrian, "and show us what you mean. I've often heard of it, but never seen it done."

Eleanor obliged. Our waiter, arriving at that moment with the salmon, guiltily took this as a gesture of impatience, and grunted apologies as he thrust the plates before us.

"You know old Mrs. Derwent?" she continued.

We all did, and said so. Socks inquired if *she* wrung her hands.

"She may, for all I know," said Eleanor. "What I wanted to say was that she declares she's seen the ghost. Her room overlooks the laurel walk. She looked out of her window late last night, at an hour when she said everybody else was in bed, and saw a white figure moving up and down——"

"Wringing its hands?"

"Well, Mrs. Derwent says so. And I thought, you know, we might all five go out there to-night and see if we can see the ghost."

"Splendid!" said Adrian. "We're all on. We want a bull-dog, a revolver, and a bottle of whisky. No decent ghost hunters would be seen without these three necessities. Archie can have the bull-dog, because he's been bitten by one, and knows more about them than we do. You can have the revolver, Socks, but no cartridges, mind. I'll take charge of the bottle of whisky."

"I suppose," said Socks, "there isn't a catch somewhere? I mean, this isn't one of the spiteful kind of ghosts which arrange for your decease within twenty-four hours of having seen them?"

"No," replied Eleanor, "this one doesn't do anything like that. She simply walks about."

"And wrings her hands," said I absently.

"Mind!" said Socks to me. "Don't forget which lady in white we're hunting. Ouch!"

"What's the matter, Socks?" Gladys inquired.

"A mere spasm," said Socks, laying his hand on his heart.

"I believe Archie kicked you under the table."

That was just what had happened. Of course, one can't do himself justice in patent-leather shoes, but I managed to hurt him.

* * * * *

We sat up later than usual that night, and sneaked out through a side-door a few minutes before twelve o'clock. Eleanor, who had set herself up as an authority on the habits and customs of the disembodied, assured us that it wasn't much use going until close on midnight.

Outside it was very dark, so dark that Gladys expressed an opinion that the ghost might actually pass us without our seeing it.

"That's all right," said Socks. "They have a faint phosphorescent glow, haven't they, Eleanor?"

"Don't!" whispered Gladys. "Br-rr-rr!"

"And," Adrian put in, "you'll notice a change in the temperature when the lady's about. 'Hist! What was that? Suddenly he was struck by an icy blast. A shape, vague, shadowy, and horrible, loomed up before him.' You know!"

"*Will* you shut up?" exclaimed Gladys.

"'Vainly,'" said Socks, taking up the story, "'did Sir Humphrey strive against the terror that bade fair to overmaster him. His past life, with all its sins and errors—including the habit of calling 'No trumps' on two suits—rose up before his eyes. Reason denied that on which the evidence of his sight insisted. There on his right hand was the spirit of the wicked Sir Roger, enacting with the spirit of his murdered wife the last episode of their conjugal infelicity. There on his left hand were the spirits of the wicked Sir Ralph—Sir Roger's father—and *his* wife, similarly employed.'"

Gladys reached for Socks's hand and squeezed it. I had an idea that Adrian and Eleanor were—to use Socks's elegant phrase—similarly employed; and it suddenly occurred to me that I was the odd man of the party. I seldom felt like this with them—generally we were a happy little family of five—but it came home to me suddenly that there was nobody beside me to pretend to be frightened as an excuse for holding *my* hand. I wished the girl with the most beautiful profile in the world were with us, and then reflected miserably that probably she would have kept her hands tightly clasped behind her back.

"On occasions like this," said I, "it is usual to send out a party of scouts, or an advance-guard, to prevent the main body from being surprised. I'll go on ahead up to the top of the walk. If you hear me scream, you'll know the ghost is coming."

"Gallant fellow!" said Adrian. "Which are you—a party of scouts or an advance-guard? There's a nice distinction."

"I think I'd better be both. You'll feel safer then. Look out for the scream."

I hurried on ahead, and did not slow down until there was a gap of some fifty yards between us. It was an eerie place in the dark. Laurels hear and answer the voice of any wind that may be abroad. Here and there were stone gods stuck upon pedestals—pleasant garden-gods in the daylight, but vaguely disconcerting in the dark. And in time I came to a spot where the hedge turned and turned again, to make three sides of a quadrangle, in which there were seats and the basin of a fountain. Neptune stood in the middle, apparently holding forth to a mixed assembly of nereids and sea-horses. As I turned to look at him, a figure in white arose from one of the seats.

I uttered a scream, but not a very loud one; it couldn't have carried more than ten yards.

"I beg your pardon," said I, bowing towards the figure. "I had to do that. I promised I'd scream when I saw the ghost."

The ghost laughed. I had always heard ghostly laughter described as "hollow," but hers was quite jolly.

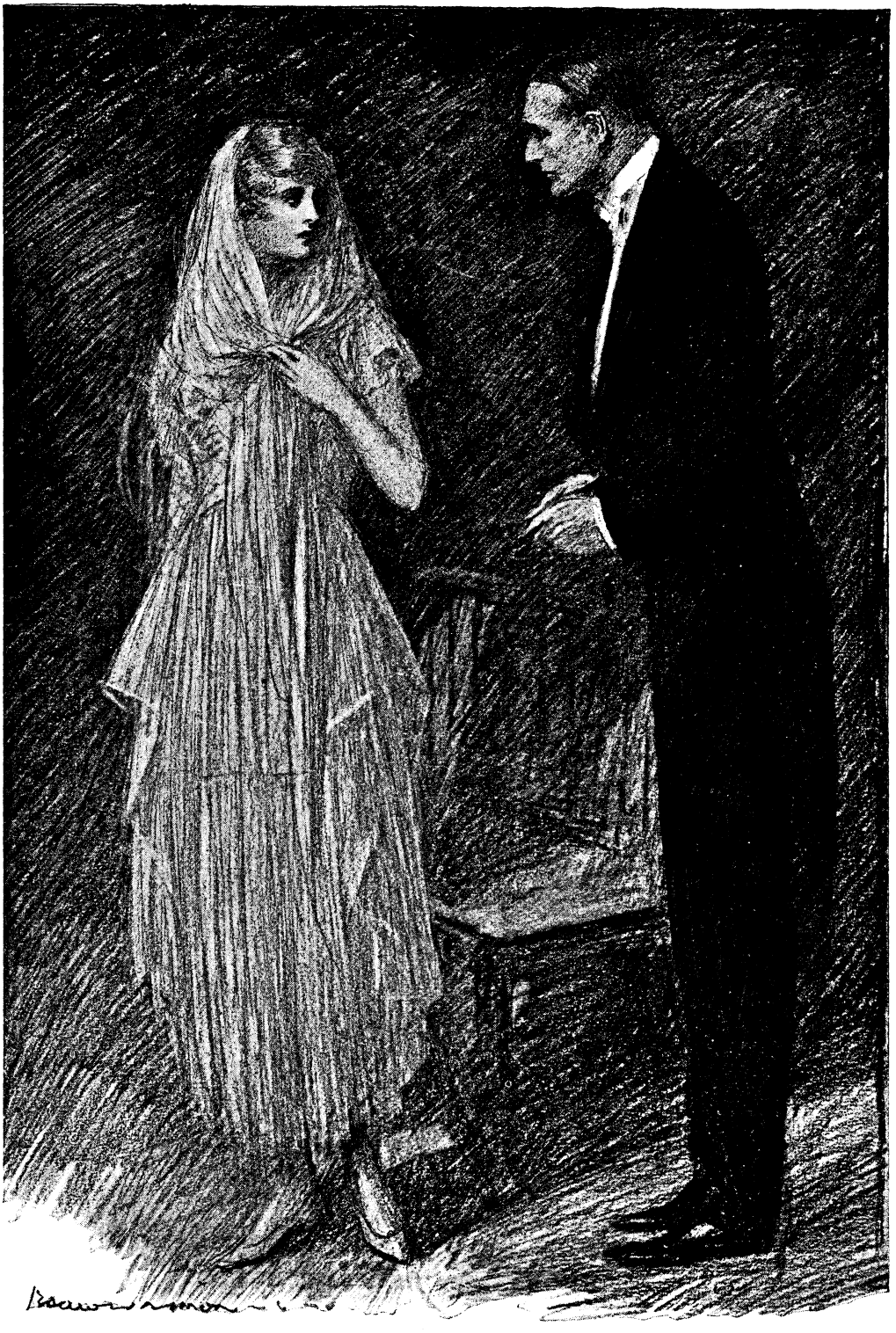
"I hope I haven't really frightened you," she said. "It's very annoying to be a ghost, and scare everybody who sees you. It wasn't much of a scream, though."

"Oh, I dare say you could scream much better. That's part of your job. And you have to wring your hands, too, don't you? To prove I'm not so badly frightened, I think I'll take a seat, if you don't mind. And may I say how sorry I am for you?"

"Thank you."

I sat down beside her.

"Believe me," I said, "I know your sad story. In life you were staying at an hotel



"'I beg your pardon,' said I, bowing towards the figure."

with your father, and in the same hotel was a man who was dying to speak to you. You saw him, and knew he was dying to speak, and you made your eyes say, 'If you say as much as "Good morning," I shall snub you. I don't in the least desire your acquaintance.' So you broke his heart."

"He should have risked it," said the Ghost, "or found some other way of knowing me."

"I repeat—you broke his heart. But retribution was hot upon your heels. One night at dinner, despite the impassioned warnings of the Swiss waiter, you tackled the *vol-au-vent*, and, of course, you died immediately. As a penance you were condemned to haunt the laurel walk until you made the young man's heart whole again."

"It's perfectly wonderful," murmured the Ghost. "How did you know? Have they got all that in the guide-books?"

"Rather! They also say that you wrung your hands. Mrs. Derwent saw you doing it last night. Do show me how you do it. Eleanor did it for us to-night at dinner, but I don't think she did it quite correctly. Not the *abandon* of grief and distress, you know. Please show me."

The Ghost obliged. I watched her and shook my head.

"Eleanor was wrong," I said. "She did it like this."

I picked up two little hands and showed her what I meant. Absent-mindedly I kept hold of them until she pulled them away.

"Tell me," she said, "what is happening in the world to-day."

"What!" I exclaimed. "Isn't there a Hades edition of a daily paper?"

"Oh, no. We have so many journalists with us that we run our own paper. But it's all local news and veiled personal paragraphs. There have been some hits—in rather bad taste, I thought—at the unhappy married life of Dis and Persephone. You know, a man in his position ought never to have married a—well, I suppose Persephone's mother *was* only a market-gardener."

"Aren't those two getting on any better?" I inquired. "They ought to, after five or six thousand years."

"Persephone's away on her three months' holiday just at present. She gets it every year, you know, but she always hates coming back. Dis is a very nice god when you get to know him, but he *is* a little gloomy. Still, you must expect some drawback if you marry above your station."

"At present," said I, "I am careering about with two couples who have only been married a few months. All day I breathe such an atmosphere of felicity that it is rather refreshing to hear of domestic trouble. I suppose there's a lot of wedded happiness where you are — Paolo and Francesca, for instance."

"Hush!" said the Ghost. "I can't discuss *them* with you. There's rather a scandal about them."

"So I've heard. I really beg your pardon. Er—to change the conversation, do you know anything about the hobbies of the male parent?"

"The——"

"My friends Socks and Adrian were telling me to-day that the best way to approach a girl was through her father, and the best way to approach him was to take an interest in his hobbies. What sort of hobbies do fathers generally have?"

"I don't know," replied the Ghost. And then thoughtfully: "Mine used to collect butterflies."

I made a mental note that I must spend the next morning swotting up butterflies. You can find out plenty about them in any encyclopædia.

"What girl," inquired the Ghost casually, "do you want to speak to?"

"None—now. The only girl I take the least interest in is a ghost."

"That's very unfortunate," said she, and made as if to rise.

"No, don't go yet," I pleaded. "The cock hasn't crowed yet. I won't intrude on you much longer. I know you choose to haunt this walk because you love it, and because you prefer to see it at night, when generally there is nobody about to desecrate its peace. I'll go in one minute, but there's something I want to ask you first."

"Yes?" said she.

"Listen, little Ghost-girl," I said. "Suppose it were given you to come back to the world again? Would you be kinder than you were to a certain man, if he came back, too, and you saw his soul in his eyes when they rested on you? Life is very short, little Ghost-girl, and the green fields only turn golden once in the light of love. Tell me, would you be kind to him?"

"I would try," whispered the Ghost-girl.

Her hands were in mine then, and she didn't take them away until Adrian coughed.

He had come quietly upon the scene, probably in search of me.

* * * * *

"Oh, yes," said Adrian, after breakfast, "here in the strong light of day I declare by the ears of Midas—that's a good oath—that I saw her."

"Was she wringing her hands?" Gladys inquired.

"She was wringing—er—well, they may be her hands soon."

"Where was old Archie?" Socks demanded.

"He—well, it's a wonder he couldn't see her, too."

"I couldn't. But then Adrian had charge of the whisky, remember."

I said this over my shoulder as I was moving away. Eleanor called after me—

"Where are you going, Archie?"

"Down the town to get a book," I answered. "'British Butterflies and Moths,' complete with coloured plates."



THE MILKMAID.

BY LUCIEN DAVIS.

FROM PEKING TO PETROGRAD

A WAR-TIME JOURNEY

By OLIVE GILBREATH

Illustrated by S. de Ivanowski

IF the Angel Uriel were casting an all-seeing eye on the Manchurian plain to-night, he might observe a feeble fly crawling across its great white coverlet. If he were omniscient as well, he might answer the riddle that revolves in my mind—why this vast whiteness does not rush in and blot out the one thing that dares move and have being in the face of its immensity, and what madness it is that sets a woman wandering a night like this. Twenty-four hours ago I sat content behind the walls of Peking. Why to-night am I a roamer in these white wastes? From my window in the Chinese Express, steadily scurrying northward, I watch the moon climb up out of those lonely borders of China we are just leaving. Is she saying us farewell, or does she, looking down on a land too wise to be restless, only smile at the folly of wandering? And there in Peking the kites hang over the courts, and the sound of the wind is in the sycamores. One moment more behind the walls of the old grey city, and I had been deaf to the call of the great world outside—so faintly it falls there in the gardens of Asia.

It was one night while the caravaners sat on the *k'ang* of a mud-walled inn, beyond the Great Wall, that the news of the War came creeping in there on the fringe of things, like rumours of the Judgment Day—a messenger splashing the white dust of the road, dispatches in his bag for the living Buddha in Urga, but no idea in his flat Mongol head of who was friend and who was foe. All along the road the next day it was the same tale. We questioned the Chinese hawkers with cages swung on poles across their shoulders, but they had no news beyond the price of thrushes. The Russian tea merchant, too, was uninformed, but the canny merchant was folding his blue summer tent and stealing away to the north. In the sun-baked border city Kalgan, the tobacco men—young Britishers and Americans—announced "*Der Tag*," while we scurried for the first train to Peking.

Far and swift a man may travel alone, but when danger threatens, the call of the pack. The fierce hunger of kind for kind which ran through my blood, as we struck through the Great Wall and raced by train down that narrow pass for Peking, shot a light on some of old Nature's secrets. Every moment the air thickened with the sense of something sinister, like a dust-storm from the Gobi. Something was happening over there—the world was breaking up—not this barbarism, but civilisation—our world—and we were barred *outside!* In Peking the storm broke—Peking seething with chaos such as dazed us children of the desert. The banks, the Legation, the *wagon-lits*, swarmed angrily. Knots of French, Germans, British, Austrians gathered on the corners. Over there, across Asia, the world was breaking up. Legation Street, where rickshaws passed to afternoon tea, clattered with the horses of the French guard, in red and blue capes, off to Europe. Sikhs, at the gates of the British Legation, tightened their red turbans and caressed their carbines with lustrous eyes; and the industrious little browns, under cover of a Legation guard, poured in sufficient troops to take the Chinese capital. Peking is a mountain-top, but the old grey city has seen few finer spectacles in the valleys below than the first records of the cosmic earthquake, all under the apricot-tiled and tilted roofs in the sunny August weather.

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Et moi! I, too, wished to stream toward Europe. And why not? Russia has always been my desire, since I could remember my godmother's first reading to me Russian poetry.

Shall I ever forget the smell of that Chinese rain swirling down Legation Street, as I picked my way across to the double-eagle bronze gates behind which the Russians had handsomely consoled themselves after the Boxer indiscretion? Even before the trek into Mongolia, and before the war lords had frowned, I had paid my gold for a ticket across Siberia. I passed the wildish, dun-coloured Cossack guard at the double-eagle gate. In *ante bellum* days I had dined with Lise's friends behind these same bronze gates, but the great white houses, barren as bird-cages, seemed to have increased in number and imposingness. The blond First Secretary who maintained Russia's reputation for diplomacy in the East was far less fearsome than the Cossack guard—his eyes a Botticelli blue even against the blue walls of his study; the hands, which toyed with a bronze paper-weight, white and powerful.



"A ROAMER IN THESE WHITE WASTES."

"To cross Siberia! *Ny*, Mademoiselle!" He shrugged his shoulders and threw out his hands in a Slavic gesture. "The road is crowded, jammed with men and horses and guns. Who knows? You might be left for weeks in a Siberian villlage."

"*Stho dyelatch*, Monsieur? I have long ago given my heart to Russia. I have all but put my eyes out over your queer, diddling alphabet, and, now that it is really fascinating, you forbid it! *Stho dyelatch?*"

"'*Stho dyelatch!*' Ah, Mademoiselle!" He put down the paper-weight, he smiled, his eyes searched me acutely for symptoms of a spy, and he smiled again—the smile of a big country. "*Ny vot!* The road may clear. I will send you across, but it may be months. Have you Russian patience?"

Patience! Three months I have sat behind the walls of the old grey city. I am so disorganised with patience that the sight of a *chit*, delivered this morning by a coolie from the Russian Legation, sucked at my breath like "the sight of a tiger's tail in the spring." Had anyone supposed that I really wished to cross to Russia, to leave this apricot-tiled city, the "last rampart of romance"?

"Mademoiselle" (the note ran in Russian—an inconvenient compliment), "the Trans-Siberian is still crowded with troops. It is no time for a traveller—least of all a woman—to be abroad. One of our Generals leaves to-morrow, however, with an Attaché. The General will be pleased to look after your safeguard. If you must go, *bon voyage*."

Bon voyage into these desolate wastes!

* * * * *

The sun was tumbling out of a Chinese-blue sky when I awoke this morning. Since the General has looked in to inquire after the health of *l'Américaine*, I feel less certain of extinction. Very *distingué* the General, with his lean body, his Hindenburg moustache and his eagle look, hurrying to join the Staff at the Front. He wears fatigue dress—blue trousers with a red stripe at the side, a khaki-coloured coat, and a cross of St. George where the collar closes. I had not met him until I became his *protégée*, but I have a vivid image of this military figure clattering down Morrison Street with outriders. The Attaché is a slim, exquisite Russian, with long eyes and a serene smile, as immaculate as if he had just stepped from Piccadilly—a type of Russian incredible to Americans bred on lithographs of stout gentlemen in Cossack beards and flannel shirts. We sat opposite at dinner once, in the great white *glavnaya missiaya*, and have bowed since from our passing rickshaws. Curiously enough, I remember him from among the other attachés and secretaries.

It was while I was standing at the window this afternoon, watching the purple hills of Shan-hai-kwan blocking themselves ruggedly in the sunset, and wishing that I might see the Great Wall, after fourteen hundred miles of mountain-tops, take its leap into the sea, when this finished type of civilisation joined me.

"You are sad to leave the East, Mademoiselle?" he asked, with a quaint precision of enunciation and a timbre of voice distinctly un-English.

"Yes," I admitted a bit disconsolately, lifting my gaze to an immaculate collar. "Is it not absurd? With every moment the old grey walls unroll, I realise that I am leaving what are no longer symbols of a strange civilisation, but signs of a land dearly beloved."

"No, it is not absurd," he returned gravely, with his eyes on the liquid amethyst of the mountains, while the train rushed on into the hollow north. "It depends upon what you ask of a land. If it is to forget days that are 'sullen and grey and bereft,' China, more than any other land, except Egypt, can gild life with romance."

I glanced at the neatly-knit figure, the beautifully-cut mouth, and melancholy eyes turned on the steppe. A figure I could have imagined in Japan, but in great, dirty, picturesque China, never.

"Is it that one may not ask for romance?" I inquired. "What will your Great Russia give?"

"Russia," he repeated slowly, as the temple roofs of a walled city emerged from the dusk—"Russia? Something far more poignant and homely than this."

Ny, each to his own East. The Slav to his, whatever it may be, and I to mine—the junks, and the pagodas among the azaleas, and the sound of the wind in the bamboo groves.

* * * * *

Twenty-four hours to the north as the geese fly! Twenty-four hours of blue figures bending rhythmically in fields, and of quaint roofs angling the sky. Twenty-four hours I had been lost in the dream that the Chinese themselves dreamed for thousands of honourable years—that never could one pass the boundaries of the Middle Kingdom—when something new shot out of the day's end—the gas-lights of a modern station, trains shrieking, porters hurrying luggage.

"Mukden!" The General's red-lined cape gleamed in the dusky car at the door of my compartment. "Civilisation and soap, Mademoiselle!"

Civilisation and soap! It was like being rolled from a silken scroll into a twentieth-century serial.

"Civilisation and soap!" I shuddered. Over there in the dark somewhere there were ancient Manchu palaces. I peered into the darkness pendant with silver mists.

"Yes." His Excellency tightened his belt. "There is just time for dinner. You will find Japanese creditable cooks."

When the two had departed to consult the little brown Swiss of the East, I voyaged about the station, sniffing the variegated *potpourri* of the Orient. The station was unpromisingly modern, but its occupants were drawn from the oldest reservoirs of life in the world. Chinese and Japanese sprawled in sundry attitudes and varied garments; a Korean sat in the corner, in his bird-cage hat; on the floor lay bundles of fur. Bundles of fur! After these, nothing held me. Sleeping Russians they were, in from the Far North, that mysterious *terra incognita* into which within an hour we ourselves should be whirling.

The terror of that first plunge into the bitter, shadowy night of the Farther North! Peking had been but a prelude; this was the precipice. Mukden itself is wind-swept enough, Heaven knows, huddling there in the pale of the Arctic storms, but at least it has lights, humanity, and roofs. Its soft-winking beacons called across the snow like Lorelei—Lorelei of fires and hearths. I confess that I watched them dim and vanish across the widening white with no slight misgiving and a frenzied desire to rush back and claim sanctuary before it was too late. But there was no turning back. The mists had begun to shroud us in their phantom pall. We were already committed to the steppe.

They are wonderfully sympathetic, these Russians, and deeply and properly impressed with the responsibility of *l'Américaine*. The General says that I am not American, but North Italian in type; the Attaché does not comment upon my type. They were standing guard over my place when I turned from my vigil at the window, and then I discovered the reason. The world was present, but not his wife. With the exception of the feminine, it was a miniature cosmos. Seven fat Chinese disposed their fur-lined brocades and settled their *embonpoint* comfortably on the seats; nine Japanese tucked their feet under cumulative kimonos; the Standard Oil men, trimmers of the "lamp of Asia," the Swedish Minister, the General, and the Attaché, settled in their greatcoats. Each traveller drew about him whatever mantle race had provided him. The car stared internationally and then fell into slumber. That is, all but the Attaché, whom I could see from the corner of one sleepy eye, proud as Lucifer, immobile as the Buddha of Kamakura, while opposite him a wadded Chinese slept the unconcerned

sleep of the East. The aristocratic tradition is, I have observed, sometimes inconvenient.

Mukden had been cold, but this place where I awoke surely went below thermometer range. The tobacco man and the oil men had vanished in the night—the last symbol erased from my familiar world. Frost eliminated the landscape. From a hollow, drum-like distance came the sound of bells, deep-toned Buddhists and momentary ecstatics punctuating the boom of the great ones. The General had disappeared, but the Attaché stood at my elbow, pale as Hamlet, but glossily booted and shining as to hair. It seemed an unconventional



"THE GENERAL."

morning encounter with an immaculate Attaché of the Russian Legation.

"What is it—a Charpentier opera?" I demanded, trying to make a clearing in the white rime of my window.

"No Charpentier, but Chang-chun," said the Attaché, rescuing my Mongolian rug from the claws of a rapacious coolie. "For us it is breakfast."

"Chang-chun?" I had a painfully confused sense of Beveridge and Putnam Weale. "I know!" I cried, with sudden enlightenment. "The far shore-line of Great Russia, where the 'grey stream of men carrying ikons, children and wives, crawls down upon Manchuria never to retreat.'"

"*Tochno*," agreed the Attaché. "You speak in the language of an Imperial ukase. At least, Mademoiselle, if your feet never stray to the Back of the Beyond—at least you have stood where the East and the North tryst."

The hotel is only a stone's throw from the station, but the General and the Attaché stowed me in a troika, and we dashed up in the manner of a De Quincey stage-coach, as befitted our rank. It is next to being a cousin to royalty to travel with a General. The Russian has a taste for the dramatic which he seems to gratify. Everyone, from the manager to the smallest *maltchik*, draws himself up when we appear, while the General sails through the line, very fierce, very *distingué*.

And now the escort pay etiquette calls at the Russian Consulate while I finish my Amur caviare and read the Manchurian wool market to the bells of the Near and Far Easts. Extraordinary paradoxes, these Russians; the most easy-going people of the globe, and the most punctilious. At least, that is the General. The Attaché, though of far older blood, I fancy, seems deeper rooted in gentleness. Two Samoyedes steal past me in long surtouts and close fur caps. Are they also of the same nationality as the General and the Attaché? Already I sense a nation which is "not a nation, but a world."

* * * * *

A war special! An edition de luxe war special for Russia! Am I dreaming? I rub my finger along the leather seats and the mahogany casing. The white perspective of Harbin streets through the window vanishes a bit unreally, but the *izvostchiks* are solid enough, and the Cossacks clumping about with bread, and the shaggy ponies. And there through the world, in the direction my heels point, prosaic creatures are sitting in offices, attending committees, and taking the elevated!

The General's orderly, a taffy-coloured grenadier, has just brought a samovar and red-currant jam. His idea of the world is sorrow, which must be drowned in tea and jam. It is the Russian post-train that has left me like this, a fossil of prehistoric man, caught through the ages with my knees under my chin, and the object of the orderly's pity.

"Like the Russian Government," the Attaché declares the post—"meant to develop an eyeless, mindless, collapsible creature."

For myself I should not have minded, but it offended my sense of things as they should be to see the General's glory eclipsed in a crevice. Deep frost covered the window, eliminating the landscape. It was too dark to read, and one of the "forbiddens" was to lower the candle which warred with the Powers of Darkness in the upper regions of the car.

The train-master had announced that we should be in Harbin by eleven, but this statement was Oriental tact and not truth. It was two before we saw a delicate coronet of lights scattering on the shining disc of plain. I buried my nose in my dog-skin; the cold would crumple me up like a mimosa leaf, while the Russians would step forth heroically into their element, their native North. And then I discovered another of old Nature's secrets. The Russians pulled their furs and shivered in their great-coats. Too many centuries had winds from glaciers blown in their faces and laid deep in their memory a race-terror, while I, with a less bitter ancestral memory, breathed greedily of freedom and the ecstasy of space! Sky, black velvet and crystal; stars, pendant points of light, and the plain a luminous blue-white reflector; horses with high-arched collars; furs shaggily blotching the snow. A magnificent fantasy. It rushed upon me, an engulfing sea. It was the North—the Siberian North! It rocked in my ears like a storm, the brilliant, savage North. I looked to the horizons; in every direction sped these terrible white distances. Somewhere there, in those prehistoric gulfs, Breshkovskaya had kept burning her lamp, and Dostoevski, Gorky, and countless hundreds of the flaming hearts of Russia.

The station was dank and dreary after the sonorous level of the steppe—dank and dreary and futile, as are all things human after great spaces. I was glad the General was Viking-tall and easy to follow, for the crowd moved about with a weary, troubled confusion. Everything was written anew in symbols of the North. Everybody was fur-clad, *cap-à-pie*, even to the news girl. I liked the skin-side-inside-fur-side-outside coats of the *nostiltchiki*, perhaps because I liked the *nostiltchiki* themselves — burly bearded chaps, with the vigour of the North in their sinews and the fear of God in their faces. But it was murky after the steppe. And the smell! It rose in clouds like incense, it descended like London fog—an intermingling of the odours of horses, sheep, *koumiss*, and unwashed humanity; the smell which the Mongolian tents take on from sheltering the little "brothers of the field"—calves and new-born lambs; the "distinctive but not unpleasant" odour of which the great Tolstoi writes. I was tired with the rocking of the train, and cumulatively sleepy, and I had grave doubts whether Tolstoi were not, after all, a barbarian.

I was lost in my musing when the General and the Attaché plucked me from contemplation of the skin coats.

"No train to-night!" The General drew his great red-lined cape about him and led the way outside to the hotel sleighs. What would the Savoy or the Plaza say to such a trio at such an hour? Doubtless a superb contrast to the comment of the bearded genie who presides here on the edge of things, characterised by curiosity, but no phrases.

"One piecee A number one ladee," he said to the Chinese boy in blue. "One piecee A number one room."

"*How*," acquiesced the Celestial, and with a simple *how* I was committed to a room, sealed but for one hinged pane. There I slept the sleep of the East under a goat-skin rug. I discovered the next morning that the sheets were exquisite linen. I cannot explain why, but it is Russian that they should have been so, especially Siberian Russian, but it is true. Harbin has the atmosphere of a gold camp. But the memory of that night—the mingling of alien voices, Japanese and Russian, that rose from that fetid hot-box below, the howling of the wind and the sharp, cold terror of those gulfs of grey mists!

It is amazing how naturally I have accepted the Attaché's serene figure in my world. Glossily booted and impeccable, he was looking up at me from the foot of the stairs when I appeared this morning.

"*Ny, Américaine*," he said, his long grey eyes stirring with a smile. "The road is blocked by a tangle of trains. We may miss the one express that crawls to Irkutsk. You know Kipling calls us 'the most westernly of Easterners.'"

The best drama in the world, I assure you, is a Chinese street quarrel. And an actor once told me that he liked playing Russian tempers because they are inexhaustible.

Did Rachel and Bernhardt, I wonder, learn their furies from these boundless, timeless Orientals? For an hour strange words hissed and scratched—expletives purely Slavonic and unintelligible burned off over the wires

in every direction. I have no quarrel with a Russian rage ; it appeals to me as admirably effective. Behold for us at least a result *magnifique!* A war special stands on the siding, being caparisoned for a dash across Siberia—one coach, an 1830 engine piled high with wood, which is also roped on at every conceivable angle, the whole looking like one of those overburdened donkeys one sees along the Wall in Peking.

The vista ahead drops away in a vast white fog. Down that phantom white distance the wind is rising, the snow eddies past the windows in plumy white swirls, and with every swirl the unknown there grows fleecier.

evidently knows her way about the world, arrives armed with roasted *riabtchiks* and a bottle of Madeira. The car is a first-class car filched from the Russian Express, fitted with mahogany and velvet, and luxuriously appointed—as the Russians know how to appoint. The General stalks through the car, followed by the orderly.

"This half of the car, Mademoiselle Américaine," he decrees, with an authoritative wave of his hand, "is your domain—drawing-room, bedroom, room to spare. Monsieur and I enter only by your permission." And he withdraws in form and with distinction—a masterly retreat.



"STOWED IN A TROIKA, WE DASHED UP IN THE MANNER OF A DE QUINCEY STAGE-COACH."

The General strides up and down the platform, a gaunt figure, his great red-lined cape unfurling behind him like the wings of a monstrous bird, while Cossack orderlies provision the car, their striped trousers moving briskly over the snow. The General brings always the same curious vision before my eyes: armies marching and countermarching, spreading myriadwise over the plain; the passion of war; millions tramping to their death; the music of the battle-hymns. Certainly through the General courses little of Pushkin's "dove-blood of the Slav."

Three young officers have come down from the barracks to greet their superior officer, and stand about in delightful trepidation. One little captain's wife, who

His orderly appears with the Siberian crab-apple maid I have borrowed from the hotel for the sake of *les convenances* until we reach Irkutsk, red-aproned and a bundle under each arm. More officers, more *kvass*, more food, more wood! Katya eyes both the steppe and me with foreboding, and crosses herself broadly. It would be difficult to say which she fears the more—the steppe or *l'Américaine.*

Ahead lies the dim abyss, filled with a misty whiteness which showers from the sky moment by moment, hour by hour, a strange, uncharted, soundless sea. Ten thousand miles of silence, ten thousand miles of white and tideless ocean. Snow—flying, drifting, swirling snow. The belted

krestianki and *izvostchiks* wave as we leave the siding.

"*Gospode tebye! Gospode tebye!*" shout the hairy giants as we pull slowly out for Europe.

What a strange fabric of impressions this journey across Siberia leaves in one's hands! A naked level flowing to the far horizon, white above and grey below, and in that rim between earth and sky something dark that flies and flies before the wind. It is the mystery of all great spaces—of Mongolia, of Egypt. But there is no touch of gold here, no sun, no heat, no shimmering sand, no intense physical mystery. All is dead, misty white—the mystery of tundra, of forests and night and death; the mystery which the Russian has written into his literature—of Raskolnikoff, of Orloff and Anna and Vronsky. Silence, space, death, and furious movement. I never shall, and never wish to, lose the memory of these snow-dunes. For me there is healing in these spaces, release for the fretted prisoner of self, and escape from the emphatically individual. It is one with the assurance that the Orient had given me—the peace of the knowledge that life is but episodic, a fragment of cloud scudding across a night sky and soon to be merged with the whole.

The General pores all day over maps and war manuals, while the Attaché and I explore the world like a pair of Robinson Crusoes. In spite of our importance, we are on a military schedule, and sometimes we sit on the steppe for hours, while the Cossacks stretch their legs and walk the sturdy Siberian ponies about in the snow. They are not handsome, these Trans-Baikal troops with whom we fraternise while the trains tangle. Sun and wind and rain have reduced them to the monochrome of the steppe until they might almost be said to have protective colouring. They are gaited, too, like Mongols—the gait of men bred to ride, not to walk, and unfamiliar with their legs.

"They do not look particularly fierce," I observed to the Attaché, as we clambered off the train yesterday to cross the tracks.

"No man can look fierce with a loaf of bread under one arm and a pan of milk under the other," answered he. "Nevertheless, they wear the Cossack stripe from cradle to grave—and like their fighting well enough. Of all the troops, they alone can never understand why they should make prisoners. If a man is dead, you can take his boots."

The General strides about like a giant sandpiper, pulling his military moustache. "The hardest troops in Europe," he vows. "Black bread and a bit of straw, it is sufficient."

Sometimes we explore the stations for food. If I did not know by a hundred other proofs, I should be convinced now that the Attaché is a gentleman, from the cheerfulness with which he blots the future ambassadorial escutcheon by eating *stchee* (greasy cabbage soup) at long tables in company with peasants and *izvostchiks*, to humour my whim.

"You see," I explained to-day, looking about the murky station dining-room for a means to vindicate my taste, and wondering what Russian etiquette demanded one should do with a slice of meat and an egg which my spoon had fished from the bottom of my soup—"you see, they are all old friends of mine, from Gorky and Tolstoi and Dostoevski, and all the rest. Ten years I have known them, but I never had a samovar with them or *smelled* them before. You know, that one over there at the end of the table is Turgenev's Ermolai — you remember, with the dogs. And that lazy one is Vankya, on Levin's estate—he went to sleep in the hay. Don't you recognise him? Look at the way they fall upon their food and devour it. I have seen boatmen on a Chinese junk eat like that when they have been poling for days against the wind until they snarled and screamed like beasts with the effort. It's not our way—it's hunger."

"Yes, it's hunger—red hunger," rejoined the Attaché; "but, Mademoiselle Américaine, don't imagine they are not old friends to me," he added earnestly. "My grandfather owned several thousand of them, and my mother still holds a sort of matriarchy down on her estate in Tver. They come to her for everything—food, medicine, justice. It's rather nice to see her holding court among them. . . . Old friends! *Ny*, they are such old friends as you in your shifting America cannot comprehend. My boyhood memories are all bound up with them—fishing with Petya, dragging out in the early morning and walking off my legs in the marshes for grouse, fighting forest fires with the foresters until I was blacked and blistered, without eyelashes, and ordered off to the great house. And lazy summer days, lying on my back under the limes, while old Agatha, the housekeeper, jingled her keys among the storehouses and smuggled me gooseberry tarts, which I, being delicate, was forbidden. *Ny*, they are friends of generations. It was one thing that made

the old landlord decent—the responsibility of them. What to do with them now, there's the rub. They are further down the scale than the Chinese peasant, of an ignorance that you cannot imagine, uncouth, canny, but superstitious, and filled with dark mystical and political passions. The *intelligentsia* have fought back and forth across them until now the whole land is sullen and distrustful. And why not? To move them, that is not impossible; but to determine their direction and momentum—ah! With the first touch of freedom they are dangerous and impractical—that is the *malaise* of too-long thwarting."

"There is something here that I never felt even in the far regions of China," I ventured, after a pause. "It is to descend into the earth as it was in the beginning."

"That is Russia," said he, with his eyes on the melancholy horizon. "The earth as it was in the beginning."

The mates of these men we often see selling milk and game at the stations, the wind whipping their skirts, broad-hipped, broad-cheeked creatures, eyes shadowed with an indefatigable sadness. I watch them for hours, and the Attaché often joins me. Yesterday the three of us stood at the window looking at two huge artichokes of shawls supported by felt boots, coquetting with the *izvostchiks* after the manner of young bears. Between these uncouth figures and the Attaché I feel a certain something in common, but the General is different.



"THE GENERAL'S ORDERLY."

"Bah!" he scowled. "The most wrinkled old crone in China takes part in a street scene with more relish than these peasants. An Italian, a Burmese, a Chinese—yes; but these Russians have no zest for life."

"Plain, endless winter, grey sky, do not make for *esprit*," commented the Attaché calmly, without lifting his eyes to the General. "No mountains, no sea; the rivers are the only romance they have, except such as they find in their own souls. To understand the Russian is to remember that the Russian word for beauty is *red*. Read the Russian geographically, and that means to see him against the background of an endless grey monotony. My conviction is that he drinks and kills only because he is bored."

I regard the General and the Attaché, and then I look at these *babas* outside in the snow. Are they of the same race? The Attaché is finely modelled—face narrow, eyes with more than a tinge of Eastern inscrutability, skin fine in texture, fingers nervously intelligent. In the canine world he would be a *borzoi*. The cigarette case he has just laid down is shagreen, because he likes the feel, and stamped with a tiny monogram in gold. A piece of peachblow or *sang de bœuf* he handles as if he were worshipping. He has a passion for French novels. The flower of an extremely sophisticated civilisation, superficially everything that the peasant is not, he is. Russia, with all her sullen monotonies, offers the most brutal of contrasts. And yet between the Attaché and the *muzhiks* I feel an indefinable something in common—perhaps only a simplicity.

The General is more baffling. Dinner we always have at night in his compartment. There are caviare and soup, with fish and olives and Siberian game. The orderly places two candles on the table, between which the decorations of the General's uniform gleam like jewels. The effect is sombre, but rich and Russian. I like to watch the shadows play across the General's face, his eyes darkening, his gaunt body relaxed against the cushions, his fingers dexterously rolling a cigarette, speaking English rapidly, brilliantly, and with more distinction than an Englishman. One forgets the indifference of the steppe, the darkness closing down like a cowl. He is interested in American women—he says they sip the honey from the flowers of the world—a man for whom, I am certain, life has run swift and deep. Twice, when I have discussed a man, he has dismissed him with a shrug and the final damnation: "He knows nothing of life." Always he seems quaffing greedily at life before some cold finality overwhelms him. I wonder sometimes if he fears to meet his death. Yesterday, when he had been

moodily watching the steppe, he turned away with "The dark door!" on his lips, and to-day again, almost with superstition. What life means for him I do not know; not what it means to me nor, perhaps, to the Attaché, smoking quietly in the corner and watching him with enigmatic eyes.

The Attaché is recovering from a long illness, and is disqualified for military service, but I hazard that something other than a fling at the capital hurries this slim, keen Slavophil toward Europe.

* * * * *

Christmas in Siberia! That is, of course, for a vagabond American. Russian Christmas lies thirteen days ahead. It is a Christmas which, I dare say, when I am old, I shall count an illusion. Even now it seems a flying chimera. At least we are on what one without a yellow-journalist conscience might term a dash. The demand for the General at the Front has cleared the tangle, and all the trains of horses and ammunition sections of grey-coated Cossacks and of Austrian prisoners, bound for the Siberian salt mines, have been drawn up on sidings while our little special rushes past. All day yesterday the track lay along Lake Baikal, that fragment of sea imprisoned here by some strange chance in centuries past, tossing yesterday in a black rage. Even the General, who pores all day over maps, laid down his papers, and the strange three of us—with the orderly and Katya at the other window—stood watching the weird scene.

As night fell, the mystery of the lake deepened. Lighted headlands jutted out into the waters, and the whole took on a new profundity, surcharged with the savagery of night and the North. I fell asleep at the window, still watching while darkness covered the face of the waters. When I awoke, it was two o'clock, Christmas morning in the West. The General stood in my doorway, looking, to my sleepy gaze, like a fur-clad angel; outside lights were forgathering.

"Irkutsk, Mademoiselle. The express waits."

I shall always treasure that sally. It was the General's one bit of humour.

The thrilling delicacy of that early morning in the North! I looked up at my tall Russians. The Attaché was breathing the air of home; his long, grey-blue eyes shone with a nervous excitement. The General showed less emotion. Through a silvery snow tissue the lights of the big white station gleamed with the festive air of an enchanted castle. With its silvery blues and greys, its ethereal other-worldliness, it might have been a scene from Maeterlinck, incredibly lovely.

The General and the Attaché saw to a ticket and a place in the post-train toward Harbin for Katya, a little dazed, but mainly stolid, whose going wrung a tear from a Cossack's eye, and then we wandered inside the station. The Attaché and I sat down under the dusty artificial palms, to drink black coffee from tall glasses, while the General found acquaintance among the sworded and booted officers with whose greens, blues, and crimsons the crowd was irradiated. A strange Christmas!

After the wintry solitudes of the plain the interior of the station seemed almost gay; but it was a delusive gaiety, which betokened the infection of humanity. Plainly we had left the steppe. For some reason, difficult to define, it was less Siberian and more Russian. The General and the Attaché, too, seemed more Russian than in Peking, as if in mingling with their own race they had acquired a new access of nationality. On the whole, the officers were well-set-up-looking men. Somehow one felt one's self nearing a mighty vortex. The hosts were gathering, strange ethnological types such as I had never seen before—foreshortened faces with copper skins, tall, hawk-nosed men, long-skirted and green-girdled, sleeping *muzhik* faces under close caps—all sucked and dragged by cosmic forces there beyond their world, neither of their willing nor their ken. It is interesting to watch one's imagination struggle upward. I can almost put my finger on the moment when the realisation of Great Russia moved into a large upper chamber of my imagination. It was there in the station at Irkutsk, and it came in one clear moment like a vision, as if I had really sat on the rim of the sun with Uriel from the beginning of the world. I saw a white level sweeping from the Pacific to the Urals, and rushing then from the Urals to Western Europe, spreading north to the Arctic Circle, and melting to the south under the blue skies of the Crimea—cool, crystal spaces greater than the surfaces of the moon which watched over our voyagings. Across wan surfaces drifted saffron horsemen out of the East, yellow clouds crossing the face of the earth—a tide that ebbed and flowed, advanced and retreated—receded to the East and there for centuries rested. And now again the cycle begins. "Not a nation, but a world," I dimly comprehended.

I awoke in the express, the sun shining and the whole landscape looking like a monster Christmas card, silvered and frosted and ready to mail. There through the world, in London and New York, Christmas chimes were ringing, packages were being untied, and gay little notes opened, and children were pulling toys out of their stockings. I looked out at the monotony of the steppe, at a row of birches fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

But there was one bit of holiday. A plum-pudding had been thrust into the car



"BURLY BEARDED CHAPS, WITH THE VIGOUR OF THE NORTH IN THEIR SINEWS."

by a kind English friend the last moment in Peking. From Chinese train to Japanese, from the Japanese train to the post, from the post to the special, from the special to the express, we attended that pudding—the General, the Attaché, and I. The Russians had never tasted English plum-pudding, and I was eager that this should be irresistible. My first mission this morning was to consult the chef. "Like so many other things Russian," the General assured me, "he will not be Russian at all, but French." And French he was, smilingly, piquantly French, as incongruous as a Paris hat in the Siberian steppe. With a flashing smile, which had lost none of its French *savoir faire* in the wilderness, he promised me that his sauce would make other puddings taste like brown paper. It did. I knew that it was a triumph the minute I saw the General's face. Under the new law there was no champagne, but the Russians ate to Christmas liberally.

"To America!" The General commanded the table like a swarthy ikon.

"To Russia!" offered the Attaché, cosmopolitan, *élégant*.

"To the Entente!" I proposed, clutching at the side of the rocking train.

"To an English plum-pudding made by a Chinese cook, sauced by a French chef, served by a Tartar on a rocking Trans-Siberian train"—the Attaché rose again, to the delight of all the enormously dining guests, smiling at us across the red table-cloths in the murky little car—"and British to the end!" What an infinitesimal point of gaiety we were in that sombre brooding!

The Russian Express is not so luxuriously appointed as the *wagon-lits*, but I should not hesitate to commend it to a traveller. In fact, to me it is depressingly comfortable; but my standards are a vagabond's. No more scurrying off the train; no more soup from which one may fish a whole course dinner, *sans* sweets and cigarettes, eaten with red-bearded giants who might pray to their own images for those of the saints; no more candle-lighted dinners *à trois*, with the darkness tipped over one like a bowl.

Even a fine style may grow monotonous, and the steppe is akin to *le grand style*. For days—more than ten—now my eyes have implored the plain for an elevation, even the slightest aspiring point in the level, but the only answer has been—more level. This morning the orderly awoke me at five to behold the Urals, the cesura between Europe and Asia. If seas flow between the Wests, what a mighty break should yawn here between the West and the East! Together we stood at the window, scanning the hollow grey light, the orderly stolid and bulky in the half-light, and I shivering in my *shuba*, straining my eyes for the pause between the two continents.

"Where are they, Ivan?" I demanded. "I cannot see them."

My acquaintance with the Urals had been mainly with lapis-lazuli in the jewellers' windows, but I should have been content with the earthiest earth had it been mountains.

But, for all my vigilance, there was only a placid flowing.

"There, *barishina*." He pointed to a darker scattering of forest swelling slightly to the left and right. "There, we are crossing them now. *Bozhe moi! Bolshoi vyeter!*"

"*Bolshoi vyeter!*" Indeed it was, a great wind. To that I agreed. It shrieked like fiends from the Deserts of Nowhere, though I had not known how to say it in Russian. But mountains! No mountains, only a barely perceptible flaring up and then quickly dying down into lethargy. How like life is the steppe, without plan, prologue, chapters, or theme!

"The Urals," the orderly affirmed briefly.

I looked at him as he stood in the early morning darkness, broadly blocked, neutral in colour, without a single incisive feature—the product and the symbol of that sombre, implacable, infinite heath.

"Ivan," I cried, "it is terrible! Do you never fear and hate it—the steppe?"

"*Ny, barishina;* we are used to it." He shrugged his shoulders stolidly.

The background is always the same, but against its white monotone is imprinted a various design. The last few days the pattern has changed noticeably from the new of Siberia to the old of Russia. We have left the pencil sketches of the birches, and now we are among the sombre oils of the deep forest. There are more villages now, and more frequently the spires and domes of Russian churches seen dimly through the flying snow. More often little log huts—*izbas*—edge their way out of the forest and blink at the world like curious owls; and the peasant himself comes out also to blink at the world or moves along the clearing, but another fruit of the forest, like the mushrooms and the lichens among which he grows. Assuredly this is different. Siberia I felt young, vigorous, the pioneer. But Russia I feel old and weary, the melancholy and mellow—Russia, the mother.

This is the sixteenth day since we went out from the walls and towers of Peking. Everyone agrees that the journey is *skychno*. The train rocks abominably. I think I shall never get it out of my brain.

There is a stronger feel of civilisation in the air now, and more spurred and booted officers are joining the train. To-morrow, if all goes well, the train-master announced that we shall be in Petrograd; all the home-going Russians have been telegraphing the news of their imminent arrival.



"BORN AND BRED A FIGHTER."

Who ever enters an unknown land without a sense of mystery both alluring and repelling? There on the plain, somewhere in the dimness, lies a city whose existence has drawn me seventeen days across this desert whiteness, a city I have not seen, whose streets I shall wander, roofs that will lodge me; sky and snow and river that will be mine, friends and tides of influence—a whole new world of thought and feeling, perhaps change—which in my natural world would never have been. How dare we boldly evoke these unfamiliar worlds for ourselves out of the void, forsaking our own paths to explore their mysterious ways?

* * * * *

Petrograd! No land "east of the sun and west of the moon," as I had feared, but true! That is, I *feel* a city there, though my eyes are still baffled by the curtain of darkness which has not as yet lifted. It is morning—eight by the French clock on the

wall—but there is not the least rift in the gloom, only a sense of something strange outlying there—a trampling of boots, men pouring endlessly through the streets, and a rumbling of guns. They are shifting troops. I hear a hoarse song and a sharp *yra*. How different, how exceedingly different, this turbulence from the peace of the East, the solitary heart of the whiteness from which we have come!

We were nearly the whole of the night finding this miracle of the marshes. Eleven came—twelve—one. The gaiety that had sprung up like a breeze at the announcement of our arrival died down. The General was wrapped in his own thoughts, and the Attaché smoked, moodily silent, and I felt a strange home-sickness, not for place, but for spiritual kindred. The General is still an enigma, but the Attaché has become a charming friend and companion. Yesterday he was not; to-day he is; to-morrow he will cease to be. How strange it all is!

Clouds were crossing the face of the moon, shaping, reshaping, merging again. The wings of the Angel of Wrath beat past us as we fled down the valleys of time, and only a miracle, it seemed, could save us or discover a city, other than mirage, in that wild incandescence. But at three the sky was illumined in the west as if by a huge candle, as the train flew on, and the flare brightened and resolved itself into myriads of points scattering on the flame. They were the first lights of "Peter's window toward Europe." The trans-steppe journey was finished. At four the train discharged its burden of Asio-European travellers into the echoing Alexander III. Station. It seemed the portentous arrival of ocean travellers rather than that of a train. Everyone met welcoming faces which, translated into Russian, means *arms*.

That is, everyone met welcome except one *Américaine*, and I took refuge among the luggage and stared at the feather-bed *izvostchiks* tied about the middle with rainbow sashes. The General was engulfed in the embrace of two tall sons, and the Attaché had vanished behind an Astrakan coat and cap. The sight of women embracing publicly always embarrasses me a trifle, and as for men—I have considered it a good reason for not being Continental. Perhaps, to speak the truth, I had a touch of three-in-the-morning forlornity. But the absence of welcome meant no lack of warm feeling. The General clicked his heels together in military fashion and waved my expressions of gratitude with a French compliment.

"Shall we meet again, Mademoiselle? Ah, it is on the laps of the gods. *Proschaiete*. Forgive my sins. I leave to-morrow for the Front." He kissed my hand; I wished it had been a white, perfumed hand, such as I am certain the General loves. A stiff bow to the Attaché, and then, the luggage having been collected and laded on the leather-aproned saints, he and his brother led the way through the echoing station to the dark bundles of fur outside, stowed me in a swaying shell, and we clattered off down the "main street of All the Russias."

How Russian the Attaché and his brother looked in their Russian setting, pouring forth a stream of language on each other—this brother who comes for one day's leave from the Grand Duke's staff and returns immediately to the Front.

Most of the talk was French, but the ejaculations were Russian. I was too occupied with the square velvet sofa-cushion hat of the *izvostchik*, too agitated with the street, which I found to be the Nevsky, and the signs, which I discovered I could read, to heed the conversation. A river of street here, a continent of square there, bulky geologic strata of houses.

"And how do you *feel* it?" the Attaché's brother asked, with a smile, as we turned into the shadow of an immense cathedral that somehow wafted back the memory of Egypt and the temples on the Nile.

"If Japan is a miniature, Russia was done by a scene painter," I hazarded.

"Quite true," he laughed, showing his white teeth. "Nothing is small in Russia, not even the virtues or the vices."

"And least of all the cobble-stones and the darkness," I could have added. "Or the loneliness," I could have wept on the Attaché's elegant and unaware shoulder.

He and the General had debated, all the way across the steppe, to which hotel to commit me, and the decision had finally fallen on the Angleterre.

Black-earth Russia, Holy Russia, potential Russia, Russia the bread-giver of nations—all lie out there in the void. The darkness is Stygian; one might loop it up, but it would always tumble down, immense and suffocating. The last familiar letter of my alphabet has vanished; everything is written in Cyrillic letters and punctuated with bearded Scythians. I wonder could even the Angel Uriel say why I rocked seventeen days across Siberia?

COMMAND

By LIEUTENANT RONALD GURNER

Illustrated by Frank Gillett

IT was only natural that as the summer wore on, and he experienced more and more of the many-sided life on the Western Front, Gus Parkin's attitude towards the Army and all things military should change, however imperceptibly. Clearness of vision and quickness in grasping any particular truth once pointed out to him were two of his strongest assets. He had learnt much since he had joined Kitchener's first army, a patriotic recruit, but critical withal; and of his pre-War principles of life, while some had been well justified, others had been rudely shaken. "Number one first." This had appeared a sound enough motto in business life, and it was some time before Gus Parkin had realised that unless it implied co-operation with one's fellows, instead of a mere endeavour to outdo them, it was a principle more likely to mislead than to help one in the Army.

The same was true in other matters, and the result of this reversion of his standards was a certain humility and readiness to learn, which those who knew Parkin best felt to be distinctly a new trait in his character.

"I always said 'e were a good 'un," said the sergeant-major of him one evening, as he sat discussing the affairs of the battalion with the quartermaster-sergeant in the transport lines. "I like 'is sort—them as 'as some go in them—always did. But they generally takes time to shake down into the Army, and 'e ain't no exception. 'E's learning now fast enough, an' 'e'll do. Pity there ain't more like 'im."

"'E don't look a soldier, though—bit nervy like an' jerky—but 'e can't help that."

"Looks don't matter — not 'ere they don't. An' 'e's done a thing or two. Look at 'ow 'e saved us at Neuve Chapelle. No, 'e'll do. But 'e's still too fond of arguin'. 'E don't seem to rid 'imself of that. Seems as if it's born in 'im, as it were, an' must come out."

This was true enough. Keen to learn as Gus Parkin might be, interested in the military world that was disclosing itself more and more to his apprehension, there remained deep down within his nature the incurable instinct to question what another would have taken for granted—to analyse the precept, however high the authority from which it emanated.

And allied with this instinct, and springing, like it, from the radicalism in his nature, was a strong tendency to criticise that *bête noire* and whipping-post of the young and inexperienced officer or man—the Higher Command. It was regrettable, but true, that by the end of August, 1915, some of Gus Parkin's *obiter dicta* in regard to his divisional and corps commanders had earned him a distinct notoriety as the phrase-maker of the battalion.

"What'll we do when peace is declared?" he had said one day. "Stay and show the tin 'ats round the trenches, fer one thing—take some time, that will." And his conundrum concerning the difference between a general and a battalion guide in the line—"One don't know the way and wants to, and the other don't know the way and don't want to"—spoke for itself. Naturally, therefore, when it was known that the battalion would be inspected by the Army Commander, upon its retirement from the La Bassée sector into the corps rest area at the beginning of September, men looked to Gus Parkin to provide the necessary running commentary on the proceedings.

"Be a treat for yer, Gus, that will," said Fred Barnsley, when the news was announced upon the first day of their return from the trenches to the transport lines.

"Army Commander, eh?" replied Gus inconsequently. "Must try an' 'ave me 'at on straight. Be a treat fer both of us—'im an' me."

"'E's a good feller, is the Army Commander," said the sober Barnsley. "'E did well in South Africa, an' 'ad a company in the Soudan. Be interestin', seein' 'im."

"Lot of interest!" remarked Gus Parkin, with some scorn. "All we shall see is a fat

old feller prancin' abaht on a 'orse an' shoutin' a bit at us, an' gallopin' off to dinner."

"Ever seen one before?" asked Barnsley, turning quietly to Gus Parkin.

"No, not exactly, but I knows."

"Thought not." And Fred Barnsley turned away again and lit a pipe.

Gus Parkin was slightly crushed, but only for a moment.

"Well, you can pretend to enjoy it, if yer likes," he said a minute later; "don't see where it comes in meself, I must say. Still, I s'pose it'll be a bit of a change from the trenches," he continued philosophically, as he polished his cap badge with vigour.

"When are we going out there?" asked Dan Kelly, who stood leaning against the wheel of a Maltese cart, a cigarette between his lips. "Sooner the better, out o' this bloomin' mud."

"Thursday, they says," replied Gus Parkin.

"What-o for vin ordinaire when we gets there!"

"What likes the place? Any shops abaht?"

"Pretty little place, Tom Farden told me. Like Lunnon, only smaller."

"'Ope we stops there when we gets there, that's all."

"You bet!" And Dan Kelly trotted off for his evening chat with Mademoiselle.

In due course the battalion arrived at the little French village where it was to recuperate and train for greater things to be. The inspection was due to take place on the third day after arrival, and extensive preparations naturally took place. The adjutant and the company commanders were much in evidence. Lieutenant Hardy, like other platoon commanders, spent no small portion of his time peering down rifle barrels and closely examining the equipment of No. 7 platoon. Captain Twining developed a habit of frequent and personal inspections of company's stores and billets.

On the day previous the Colonel inspected the battalion in full parade order, and on the evening of that day Gus Parkin finally and decisively summarised the entire proceedings as "bloomin' eyewash."

"That's what it is," he repeated, looking almost aggressively round the assembled company in the "Vieux Chasseur." "It's bloomin' eyewash. We carries on in the trenches, an' they takes us out an' says, 'You're muddy,' and tells us to scrape it off and look pretty, same as a peace-time soldier; and fer what?"

"Fer an inspection by the Army Commander, me lad," replied Fred Barnsley. "It don't 'appen every day, an' yer knows it. But p'r'aps you'd rather be wallowin' in the mud?"

The rest, scenting an argument between Barnsley and Parkin, usually an interesting enough form of entertainment, listened expectantly.

"Almost think I would," replied Gus Parkin defiantly. "You're doin' yer bit then, anyway. What's the good of all this, I'd like to know?"

"Ter keep up the name of the battalion, me boy, if yer want to know. The Army Commander don't see us every day."

"Better if 'e did, instead o' growin' fat be'ind the line."

Barnsley looked quickly at Gus Parkin—there was more than his usual cheery combativeness here — a spirit almost of venom, it seemed, was in this remark.

"So yer think 'e grows fat, do yer?"

"Yus."

"Then yer a —— fool!" Barnsley spoke with quiet conviction. After all, he was a Regular, and it was up to him to defend a system in which he believed.

"'Opin' to be an army commander yerself, perhaps, are yer?" Gus Parkin attempted to palliate the remark with a smile—he was going rather far, he knew, but he felt nettled.

"No; I'm better off as I am. 'Tain't as easy as yer seems to think. Nah, then, drink yer beer, and don't talk so much about what yer knows nothing about."

Parkin realised that the subject was closed; also that to be a Regular limited one's outlook.

"'E can't 'elp it," he explained afterwards to Dan Kelly. "'E 'as to stick up fer all this tommy-rot. 'E's a good fellow, all the same."

"Yus, an' p'r'aps 'e's right."

The day of the inspection dawned fine. Final and anxious scrutiny of bayonets, buttons, cap badges, and equipment; and when the Colonel passed along the ranks, early in the afternoon, even his eagle eye failed to detect any blemish sufficient to bring undying disgrace upon the 2nd Eastshires.

"Good enough," he said to Major Donkin. "They'll do. Shan't be sorry when it's over, I must say."

And when the bugle sounded punctually at 2.45, few could have told from Gus Parkin's emotionless expression, as he stood stiffly at attention, that these sentiments were shared



"'If only I was there.'"

by him, but for a very different reason. From the corner of his eye he watched a little group of figures walk across the field to the battalion and enter into converse with the Colonel.

"Stand easy!" came the order the next moment. This seemed unexpected, somehow. "Company commanders will please call their companies to attention separately," called out the adjutant. This gave Gus Parkin more chance to watch and criticise, if so he would. Narrowly he scanned the faces of the Generals, as they passed along the ranks of A Company in front of him.

The Divisional Commander — he knew him — young, alert, dapper. The Corps



"'So we're in the same boat, aren't we?'"

Commander also he had seen. His eyes rested on them with only a passing interest, and travelled quickly to the Army Commander.

The group approached nearer, and unmistakably, and almost in spite of himself, Gus Parkin noticed one thing in common on the faces of the three men, in other ways so different—in each, round the eyes and the mouth, deep lines of thought and care. Boyish, stern, and patient the three men looked—three well-marked types — but in each the lines were there.

"Company, 'shun!" His thoughts were rudely broken into. And then, as the General passed down the lines, when the opportunity

offered he gazed straight and full into his eyes, and knew beyond all question or discussion that he stood in the presence of a man, and a man not in all ways such as other men.

Gus could read something of a man's worth in his face and manner—keen-lived London life had taught him that—and there was something, whether in the eyes, the jaw, or the very movements of the hands, that caught and held his attention. "In command of a hundred and fifty thousand men, are yer?" thought Gus Parkin. "Yer looks it, too!" "I'm as good as you," had been his previous defiant strain of feeling—unexpressed, but there. He knew at this moment that this was in no sense true—that this man was by rights his master, and master of many better than he.

"Stand easy!" again, and Gus found food for reflection.

Then there was a slight movement, and he heard a quiet voice speaking. "I'm glad—very glad—to have been able to see you, officers and men of the Second Loyal Eastshires. You have done well, and will do well, I know, in whatever comes in the future.

"To do well in this War means to do well in perhaps the greatest test men have ever faced so far. I know a little of war's hardships. Perhaps some of you think not much, but your Corps Commander will tell you, if you ask him, of the marches we did together, without food or water, when he was in my company in the Soudan. Your burdens are greater to-day—perhaps all our burdens are, for it is not easy to know that the lives of so many men are in one's hands. You cannot always think of these burdens as privileges, but they are, and the greatest privilege, as you will know one day, is yours.

"You will do well, and you will be glad, I think, when the end comes, that you have not failed."

"Well, what d'you think of 'im now?" asked Fred Barnsley that evening in billets.

Gus Parkin, thoughtfully smoking his pipe, did not immediately reply. His silence was the most effective admission of error, and Barnsley, realising this, felt it unnecessary to labour his point. "'E's a good feller, yer know," he continued, after a moment—"sort of man fer the job, I says."

"Yus. But, yer know, Fred, it seems ter me as 'ow it must be a pretty easy job, after all. 'E's got plenty o' fellers to do the work fer him, an', 'owever good 'e is, 'e ain't got much to bother 'im."

"Don't you be too sure, me boy. There's plenty o' things them big fellers 'as ter do that you and I don't ever 'ear of. What about plannin' offensives, for one thing? Somebody's gotter do it, and it wants some thinkin' out, that does."

"But we ain't always 'aving offensives, not by a long chalk."

"An' then, yer know," continued Barnsley, "yer remember what 'e said about bein' responsible fer men's lives—p'r'aps there's something in that, too. 'E looked as if 'e'd 'ad a thing or two ter think of, anyway."

"Yus, 'e did," agreed Jim Mildmay; "and the Corps Commander, 'e did as well. 'E 'ad our brigade at the beginnin'. 'Is moustache were brown then— it's almost white now."

"Lumme! Changed quick—it's only a year!"

"Yus. It's the worry, they says—same as that skipper feller at Messina, at the earthquake, whose 'air turned white in a night—something."

"Well, if I was 'im," said Gus Parkin, recovering some of his old form, "I'd let others do the thinkin', an' take it easy. I wouldn't worry."

"Oh, yes, yer would," said Fred Barnsley.

The Brigadier and Divisional Commander perhaps guessed, but only the Corps Commander and Army Commander knew, the true significance of this review of the 2nd Loyal Eastshires. Soon afterwards, however, rumours began to get about, and when the brigade moved away from billets one early dawn, and up the road to Loos, there were plenty to read, with more or less accuracy, the signs of the times.

"Yes, it's the pukka thing this time," said Captain Twining. "It's going to be a good deal bigger than Neuve Chapelle, and they say the French are chipping in as well. You'll enjoy your first show, Norton"—smiling at his latest-joined subaltern.

"Hope so. They must be rather thrilling, these shows—better than slogging at it in the trenches. Bombing is going to play a pretty important part, it seems."

"Yes. This Mills is an awfully good bomb. Which reminds me—have you got your bombing squad fixed up now? You want to get them together."

"Yes. They should be a pretty good crowd. Here they are." And Norton took a pencilled list from his pocket.

"Yes," said Twining, "I know all these fellows. Glad Parkin is in; he's a useful fellow, and always up to a stunt on his own,

Corporal Shaw in charge, and responsible for supply of bombs?"

"I suppose that means he stays behind?"

"Not necessarily. Only if the supply is uncertain, in which case the next fellow carries on in the trench. But we'll go into it all thoroughly to-morrow."

Life seemed particularly rose-coloured to Gus Parkin the following evening. Bombing appealed to him more, perhaps, than any other branch of trench warfare hitherto experienced.

"Can't understand why I didn't volunteer fer it before, instead o' foolin' about with signallin'," he remarked to Jim Mildmay.

"Can't understand why yer wants to fool about with it now," came the gruff reply. "It's all my eye, all this 'ere talk about bombin'. 'Tain't in infantry trainin'."

"This War ain't in infantry trainin'."

But bombing prospered, and the day drew near. At last came the promulgation of the hour of the attack and the Commander-in-Chief's final order to all troops engaged.

"Break the enemy's line." "Not 'arf!" said Gus Parkin, as he sat on a fire-step and lovingly handled a Mills.

* * * * *

It was hard enough to know what had happened or was happening during that wild day, but a few concrete facts stood out in Gus Parkin's mind—enough for the needs of the moment. Lieutenant Norton was knocked out, lying at that moment, with a broken leg, somewhere in front of the old German front line. Corporal Shaw was dead. The company had reached the second objective, and bombers were to bomb along the communication trenches and establish blocks two hundred yards down. He was in command of his squad. But—Captain Twining had said it—he was himself to remain in the old German trench, establish a bomb dump, and keep the party supplied. Bombs were scarce, and the supplies were of first importance. "A bombing officer often has to do the same," Captain Twining said, and Gus had to be content. He had just seen the rear man of the party vanish round the bend in the communication trench.

"Funny way of bein' in command," he muttered, as he collected, detonated, and dispatched bombs. Were they all right still? That shell must have been pretty close. Was it a narrow trench? he wondered. Sounds of bombing now! Shrapnel over the trench, and more bombing. They were still carrying on, anyway. Then men seemed to move around him in a confused medley. There was a fresh company moving up to take over the ground. But what of his bombers? Was the block established? Surely it was time now? And why no sounds of bombing? Was all well? Surely, if anything had happened, he would have been told, unless, perhaps—— But he refused to think that.

Then, "If only I was there!" he muttered hoarsely.

"Yes, I felt that, too," said a quiet voice. Gus Parkin looked up, to see the Brigadier beside him.

"What's happening here exactly, please?"

"We got some men down that trench, sir, bombin'; they're a-makin' a block.

"Are they all right?"

"'Eaven knows, sir! I wish I was there!" Something in the haggard face and drawn mouth made at that moment strong appeal to the Brigadier.

"Yes, my lad. But I've got three thousand men here somewhere, so we're in the same boat, aren't we?"

"Yessir."

"Except—that your men will return, I hope, but some of my men will never return." The Brigadier passed on down the line.

* * * * *

"So you saw the Brigadier," said Captain Twining, as he sat in a German dug-out, collecting accounts of B Company's individual part in the battle.

"Yessir, just before the bombin' party returned."

"He was going round, I suppose, seeing things for himself?"

"Yessir, seemed to be."

"How did he look?"

"Bit worried, sir—worryin' about the men, I think, sir."

"H'm! I'm not surprised. But the brigade did jolly well, apparently, and so did your bombers. We've had some casualties, though, I'm afraid, in the company." Gus Parkin had seen that look before. How could he tell Captain Twining that he sympathised?

Irresolutely he paused at the door of the dug-out, then took one step back again.

"It's 'ard sometimes, bein' in command o' men, ain't it, sir?"

Captain Twining looked up. "Yes, Parkin, it's very hard."

"An' them big fellers, they must feel it worse, mustn't they, sir?"

It seemed an inadequate remark. But what further atonement could Gus Parkin make?



THE VICAR AND HIS CHILDREN: A STUDY FOR GOLDSMITH'S "THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD." BY H. M. PAGET.

THE BREAKER OF THE LAW

By EDEN PHILLPOTTS

Illustrated by Gunning King

'TIS a very dangerous thing to run counter to "law and order," and few men can call to mind a case where such an adventure was justified. But it is said there never was a rule without an exception, and in the case of Jim Widecombe you find yourself up against the amazing example of a law-breaker who did right.

Me and a few other old men have argued the point a score of times, and some hold that Jim did not do right, but did evil, and though rewarded in this world, he'll surely be punished in the next; while other chaps, myself among the number, reckon that it was put into Jimmy to do the thing he did, for surely no ordinary man would have taken such a line unless a voice above his conscience had told him to do it.

Be that as it will, 'tis a very curious tale, and when you've heard it you can decide about the morals for yourself. And my only fear, in telling the same, is that reckless young people might be tempted to do what Jimmy did, given the like opportunity. But we'll hope none will ever get the chance, for 'tis very certain such a queer event could never happen again.

To begin with, Jimmy Widecombe always owned to peculiar opinions, and there again, though dangerous in themselves, they doubtless helped him in the matter under notice.

Though of no higher standing than a farm labourer, he had a very active pattern of brain, and he read the papers and was a lot interested in the ways of capital and labour. He went a good bit further than most Dartymoor people, and though we boast Liberal opinions, you wouldn't call us more than honest Radicals for the most part. We only want the standards of living rose a bit, and the power to save granted us, and a general feeling of security, which every man should have, for without security you might just as well be a fox or a plover; and you can't be properly self-respecting if you don't know how you're going to tide over next winter.

But Jim went a long way further than that. A workhouse boy himself, he'd been pitchforked into the world at an early age, and didn't know his parents or anything about his family, which in itself is a disappointing thing. So he did labourer's work, round about Widecombe first—where he was found in his infancy wrapped up in a piece of blanket on Valiant Dunnibrig's farm—and then he drifted deeper into the Moor, and took a small cottage nigh Postbridge, in the days when Nicholas Parratt was water-keeper and Tom White farmed Belliver newtakes.

For White Jimmy worked, and there it was he fell in love with Tom's daughter, Agnes. Despite his Socialistic opinions and general feeling that all things ought to be share and share about, and other ridiculous notions that won't stand the light of day, Farmer White liked Jimmy very well, for he was a good worker and a clean, energetic, and chapel-going young man. He didn't drink and he didn't smoke, but against those virtues you might set some other things he didn't do, for he didn't touch his hat to his betters, and he hadn't got a good word for the squires or parsons or any other such pillars of the land. But while others balanced his virtues against his failings, and

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never could make up their minds about Jim, Agnes White, the farmer's daughter, held that there was nobody like him in the world. She was a quiet, peaceful maiden, by no means in love with her own voice, and having no opinions at all till Jimmy came along. Then, after he'd been working for her father for six months, Agnes echoed Jimmy, and doubted not that, if he had the power, he'd very soon make the world a better place to live in for the common people.

They were a good-looking pair, though Jimmy always had a discontented expression, along of thinking too much, but he had fine eyes, brown and bright, and a good stout body, well set up and above the common height; while as for her, she was red as a rose, with beautiful blue eyes, flax-white hair, and a fine figure.

Tom White, being a widower, didn't get wind of what was doing as quickly as he otherwise would. Then a winter evening came, and Agnes was in the village and White smoking in his chimney-corner, when Jimmy dropped in from his own cottage, two mile away in Laughter Hole, a combe by Dart River. For he didn't live at Belliver Farm. He'd found the cottage out of repair when he came to Postbridge district, and, being a very independent fashion of man, built it up again with his own hands and dwelt there, and ministered to himself with great skill. The place was always clean as a new pin, for he had woman's craft with the wash-tub and needle, and it wasn't for his comfort only that he wanted to marry Agnes White, but because he loved her in a very masterful fashion.

And now he asked Tom's leave to wed. He hardly expected the farmer would say "Yes," but he was none the less disappointed when White turned him down once for all, and left not a shadow of doubt in the young man's mind. He listened while Widecombe spoke, and didn't interrupt him.

"'Tis like this, farmer," he said. "Your daughter Agnes and me love each other with all our hearts, and I put it to you that you can't very well stand between a grown man and woman so inclined. You know I'm a clean-living, honest chap, and though I'm alone in the world, 'tis no odds, for you're not the sort to judge anybody except by himself. I'm twenty-three years of age, and I've got my head screwed on the right way, and you know I can stand to work and tackle any work that comes along inside farming. And Agnes—but I needn't say nothing about her, except that she's set on me, and we'd make a good useful couple; and you wouldn't suffer noways, but gain a lot if we were man and wife."

White nodded, spat in the fire, and asked one question—

"What have you got to offer, Jimmy?"

"Myself," said Jimmy.

"And if you was took, by the will of the Lord, and left a widow and a barrel load of childer before you're thirty year old—what do they fall back upon then?"

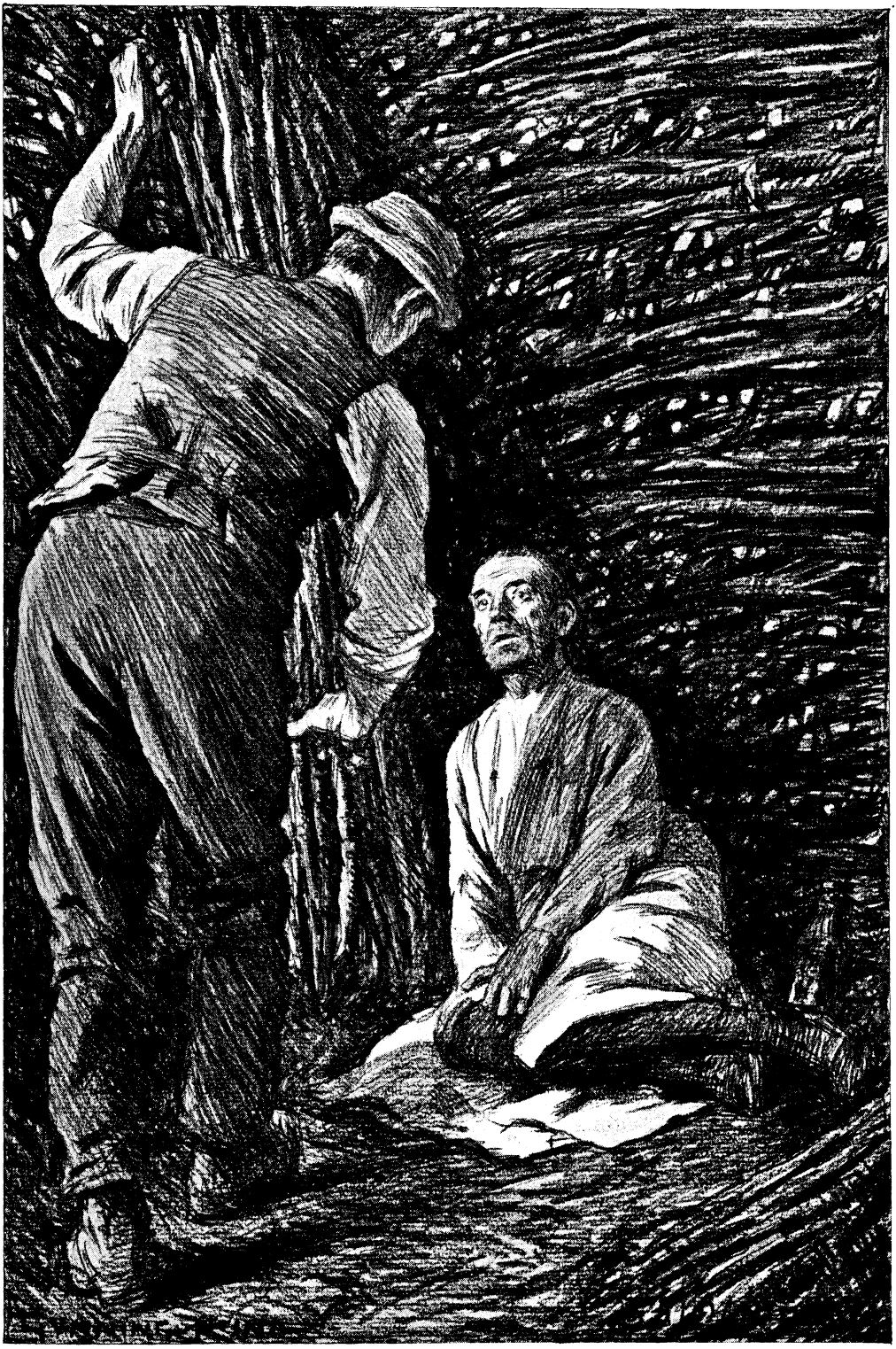
"You," said Jimmy.

But Tom shook his head.

"Be very sure I should look after my child and my grandchilder," he answered, "but if your free and easy opinions ain't brought you more sense than that, Jim, I'm afraid you're not quite husband-high yet, my boy. For my part I tell you that the man who marries my daughter must do one of two things—insure his life for a good round sum, and show me he can pay the calls, or else be prepared to let me see his banking account, so that I know how it's going to be. I've got a very good opinion of your deeds, Jim, and a very poor opinion of your words. You're a glutton for work, and have no vices; you do all that you're called to do, and you spare no elbow-grease, either. In fact, you're going on very well; but you mustn't look as high as your master's daughter, Jimmy, until you've got something more behind you than the cheek of the devil and a lot of doubtful ideas. So there it is, and we'll say 'as you were.' We won't have no talk of marrying or anything of that for the present, till you're worth more in open market, and have got a bit more hair on your face and sense in your head."

Well, there it was, and I doubt not Widecombe knew at the bottom of his brains that Tom was in the right. But of course he couldn't throw up the sponge and say so. Indeed, he was greatly troubled; but he kept his nerve, and didn't show temper, or make a fool of himself. He changed the subject, said 'Good night,' and went his way. And no doubt it was in a stormy frame of mind he departed—to be faced there and then with the adventure of his life.

His bit of a two-room cot lay alongside a larch plantation under the slope of Laughter Tor just above the river; and when he came to it, though a starry night, and all still and frosty on the earth, the first thing he found was his door open and a chink of light showing from within. He felt a good bit put about, you may be sure, and crept up softly



"When he was curled up there, Widecombe built it up again,"

and filled the door, so as to catch anybody who might have broken in. And what he saw inside startled him above a bit.

For there was a man sitting in his chair beside the table, eating the supper he'd put out for himself against his coming home. And the man was an escaped convict from the prisons. Such a one was known to be at large; but the rumour ran he'd been traced to Holne Moor, and certainly the last thing Jimmy expected was to see the ruffian eating his supper.

"Hullo, my boy!" he said. "You've run into it this journey."

He gripped his stick for fear the gaol-bird would show fight; but t'other had no fight in him. He was a small man, neat-built and trim, with a pleasant face despite his beard and bristles; and when he spoke Jimmy knew he was a gentleman, and that didn't make him feel any kinder to him.

"All right. I'll make no bother. You must forgive me for lighting your candle and eating your grub—I was at my last gasp," he said. "Have you got such a thing as a drop of spirits? I'm dead beat, and it's simply beyond my physical power to come with you to-night unless I have some stimulant or am allowed to rest. I'm awfully sorry to have taken your food; but, frankly, I was starving. And I'm abominably weak."

"You must have been a fool to think you'd get clear. No man's ever escaped from Princetown."

"Perhaps I was; but it seemed good enough to try. I've got right on my side—that's always a help."

"You all say that."

The other closed his eyes and laid his head back wearily.

"If I couldn't make a judge and jury see it, I can't hope to make you," he said. "Anyway, I'm sorry I've given you all this bother."

"You needn't mind that. You'll be good for a five-pound note to me."

"I might be good for a thousand-pound note."

"I expect most of you grey-birds promise that sort of thing when you're catched."

"I dare say we do. You've only got my word for it. But it's true."

"I'm not a common man," explained Widecombe. "I know law miscarries sometimes. I haven't got much more to thank the world for than you have, very likely."

"Then God help you!"

"God helps them who help themselves, I believe. Not always, though. Perhaps you helped yourself to what didn't belong to you?"

The convict smiled.

"Never, until to-night, when I ate your dinner."

Whether his bad luck with Tom White had put Jim's mind out of gear, or his own muddled opinions led him to do so, or something about the escaped prisoner, who can say? Certainly Jimmy never knew himself; but he didn't feel as you and me, or any other respectable man, would have felt under the circumstances, and faced with a malefactor.

"I can give you a drink of milk," he said, "nought else. I'm teetotal myself."

"Thank you kindly—you're a brick."

Jim went to his larder. 'Twas a hutch behind the house, and he took his time and left the door open. For there's no doubt he didn't want to have the handling of that runaway, and he wouldn't have been too sorry when he came back to find him sped. But 'twas far beyond the man's power to go a step. He'd been twenty miles and more doubling about since dark, and he was all out and weak as a babe. When Jim came back with the milk, the man was very near asleep, but he pulled himself together and drank the milk greedily—a pint of it. Then Jimmy kicked up a scad of peat on the hearth and told the chap to sit in his easy-chair. He tottered when he rose, but sank down in the easy-chair and took off his boots and stockings and warmed his feet.

The man was far too tired to talk, and he very soon fell dead asleep; and while he sat opposite and looked at him, Jim's thoughts took a queer turn—in fact, you might say they went back on him and contradicted his past opinions; for he'd always said what he'd do if ever he took a runaway convict, and always declared himself on the side of the State. As a Socialist he supported the State before all things, and believed in the authority of the State first and last. But now he was a lot more concerned with the individual than the forces that had locked him up. Before the convict went to sleep he had assured Jim that he was an innocent man wrongly sentenced; and now Jim began to ask himself whether it might not be true. Men were wrongly sentenced sometimes, and innocent men had been hanged, as everybody knows. There woke in him a curious wish to believe the man.

First he'd been indifferent, and just minded to let the prisoner go and look after

himself; but now, to his own surprise, there rose up in him a strong inclination to take the sleeping chap's word and give him the benefit of the doubt. Jim argued with himself against such a rash act, but there it was—a sort of deep feeling at the back of his mind.

The man looked mighty innocent in his sleep, and about two o'clock in the morning, if he'd known it, the runaway had won Jimmy Widecombe, and Jim meant to befriend him.

He knew the danger and the grave punishment he was earning; but his own life didn't look specially hopeful for the minute, and partly in a sort of reaction against his own disappointment, perhaps, and partly owing to something about the forlorn wretch himself, Jim found his will ripe for breaking the law and helping the prisoner to do the same.

He made fast the door then, and went to his own bed. And, what's more, he slept fairly sound for a few hours. Then he woke at the first grey of dawn, cooked a few rashers of bacon, and brewed some tea, and roused his visitor.

"'Tis like this," he said. "I've thought over what you told me, and—why, I don't know—I'm minded to help you. I'll get you off, if I can; and if you're lying to me, then may God give you your reward."

The other woke up at that. He didn't say much, but he looked a lot.

"I ask no more," he said. "I believe in God as truly as you do. I can only ask you to trust me, and I won't even waste words promising you a reward; but, once free, you will be my first thought. It's a pure speculation from your point of view, but this I can assure you—it will be in my power to advance your welfare very greatly. I don't ask you to do much, for with you on my side, to escape should be easy enough; and, once free, I shall have many powerful friends to help me with the future work of my life, which will be to prove my innocence. If you will hide me somewhere to-day, and show me the way to Ashburton to-night, that's all I ask of you. At Ashburton there is one who knows my story and believes in me, and will do all that is necessary."

Well, Jimmy obeyed. He dared not leave the man in his house, for the hunters were as likely to come that way as any other presently, so he went to a woodstack at the edge of the plantations, broke out the side, shoved in a blanket, and let the convict get in and settle down as comfortable as need be till nightfall. Along with him he put food and drink, and then, when he was curled up there, Widecombe built it up again and made all suent, in such a fashion that no eye could suspect it.

After that he went about his business till night; and not till two o'clock next morning did he start to take the man where he wanted to go. He lent him a pair of his trousers and an old cap and coat, and he burned the convict clothes before he started. Walk the man couldn't, so Jim got out his pony and set him upon it.

They went across country, and avoided the high-roads and bridges, for all these places were being watched very close. Without adventure they travelled, and finally Jim took the man to a big house at Ashburton, where responsible people dwelt. In fact, 'twas the house of Matthew Oakshott, a Justice of the Peace, whose name Jimmy very well knew. And that was the end of the adventure for a fortnight.

But meantime Widecombe had a shock, for the day afterwards, while the Moor was still ringing with the escape of the convict, it got out who he'd helped so clever, and he learned it was a very high-born man, famous for a great crime. In fact, the whole business of the Fortleigh murder came up in the papers again, and the public was reminded how the Honourable Geoffrey Fortleigh had been tried and sentenced to death for the murder of an uncle, by whom he and others stood to get a fortune. 'Twas a very complicated business altogether, and in the end the chap was sentenced to die; but there had always been scores of people to say he never done it, and he maintained to the end that he was innocent. And the upshot was they didn't hang him, but softened it into penal servitude for life. And my gentleman had served three years, and no more, when he took his chance and got free. His character in prison had been very good, and he was working in the farmyard at the time he got off. But how he'd beat the record and made a clear escape, none could guess. Indeed, the authorities were quite certain sure he was on the Moor still, and might be expected to turn up any minute, if he hadn't fallen in a river and drowned himself.

So Jimmy waited to see what would happen next. And meantime he had to break to Agnes White that her father didn't see his way to their engagement.

She was a plucky sort of girl, and had too much sense to make a fuss about it; but

she bade Jimmy keep his temper and go on with his work, and hope for better times. He was the only one for her, whether or no, and she was ready and willing to wait a bit.

Then the fortnight passed, and an inquiry was made, for nought had been heard of the runaway, and it seemed clear enough he'd got off. Inquiry was instituted amongst his swell relations and such-like, but nothing was heard, nor were his bones found in bog or river, as the people at the prison no doubt hoped they would be.

Then Jimmy began to think his feelings had got the better of him, and that he had done a mighty wicked deed. In fact, he was just beginning to feel a bit remorseful about it, when he had a letter come by post —in itself a very surprising thing to happen to him. But there it was, directed to—

MR. JAMES WIDECOMBE,
Laughter Hole,
Postbridge.

The postman that brought it found Jimmy at home, and Agnes along with him, for she'd come over with some bread from Belliver farmhouse ; and postman he laughed, and said he hoped Jimmy wasn't going in for getting letters, as it weren't much fun delivering 'em and tramping two miles off the beaten track to do so in winter-time.

And 'twas then that Agnes got to know the secret, for Jimmy hadn't dared tell even her before. But now she was as full of interest in his letter as he could be himself, and when he'd read it he let her do the same, and then explained what he had done, well knowing she was strong enough to keep a secret—especially a secret that would have locked her lover up if ever she let it out.

He told her everything, and felt a good bit better for so doing ; while, as for her, of course she took his side in the matter, and supported him stoutly, and said she was sure as could be that Jim had done right, and time would show he had.

The letter came from Ashburton, and said little, but asked Jimmy to walk over and call on Squire Oakshott the following Saturday afternoon. Which he did do, and a very curious interview he had. Mr. Oakshott was an old man, and very highly renowned on the countryside for a good landlord and a pillar of Church and State. But when he had Jim in his study, he told him frankly he had done right, and need be in no fear of the consequences if he'd only keep his mouth shut for the present. Then Widecombe felt better, and his remorse left him from that hour.

The old gentleman explained that his son was a famous lawyer, and that he had defended the Honourable Geoffrey Fortleigh at his trial. He went into a flood of details, which don't concern us ; but the point was that, owing to amazing circumstantial evidence, the prisoner had been wrongly convicted, and was undoubtedly innocent, both in thought and deed, of the crime imputed to him.

"And a time will come when the truth is bound to appear," said the old man. "Very sure am I of that ; and very sure that the real murderer, though he little guesses it yet, will soon be at the end of his tether. Mr. Fortleigh is safe ; he is doing what only he can do, and he is on the way to proving his innocence in the only effective manner, by discovering the real criminal. But silence and secrecy are vital for the present."

"I'm sure I'm a new man now I've heard your honour on the subject," said Widecombe, "for I began to fear as I had done evil, and wickedness had been put into me."

"Fear no more, then. You did an extraordinary and unusual thing for any man to do, Mr. Widecombe," said old Oakshott, "and it was without doubt 'put into you,' as you say, but not by the powers of wickedness."

He then went on to talk of Jimmy himself, and inquired of his position and prospects and ambitions.

"We must be careful," he said, "that you run no risk at this stage of affairs, for few would say you had done right, and many would blame you. But you are safe, and the only problem is how to help you materially without making your neighbours wonder at the reason of your sudden good fortune."

Jimmy was quite shrewd enough to see this, and, looking a good bit ahead, 'twas planned that he should go to Squire Oakshott as under-gardener for a start. And even that they managed careful, for it was ordained that Squire should set an advertisement in the paper, and Jim should read it and apply.

"That'll work very natural indeed," explained Jimmy, "because my master, Tom White, won't let me be tokened to his daughter, through no fault, you understand, except poverty. And I'll ask you to apply to him for my character before you take me, because he's a just man and will tell the truth."

All which worked out very well indeed, and nobody was sorry about it except Farmer White himself, who had to give Jim a good character and little liked losing him.

And that stage of the story filled six months, and then Squire Oakshott's son, the lawyer, came to Ashburton, and showed such a fancy for Jim that nothing would do but he went up London way and took over the lawyer's little model farm in Surrey.

'Twas there that Widecombe heard more about the Honourable Geoffrey Fortleigh, for Lawyer Oakshott knew that he could be trusted, and explained to Jimmy how, all unknown, with clever friends to aid him, the escaped prisoner was working like a mole underground, and slowly but steadily getting his evidence together against the real murderer. But that's a long story that don't come into this, and all that mattered to Jim was that he'd saved an honest man from penal servitude, and been handsomely rewarded for so doing.

He was now in a good position and making fancy money, though he kept the fact to himself; but when he wrote presently and axed Tom White again for his daughter's hand, he sent along with the letter the receipt on the premium of a life insurance policy for two thousand five hundred pounds; and so Tom saw 'twas business, and he couldn't very well stand in the way much longer.

And all the time Jimmy was looking on ahead, and, indeed, he told his future father-in-law that, after a few years were passed, he hoped to be able to come back to Belliver and bring his wife also, so that Farmer White should have his own about him long before he was old and infirm enough to need them.

Indeed, it fell out that Jimmy was back even before he thought to be, for after he'd come to Postbridge for a holiday, and wedded Agnes, and took her off with him to Surrey, the murder was out, and the real murderer was catched and convicted. The whole story made a nine days' wonder, and very pretty reading in the newspapers, for 'twas a devilish clever tale altogether, and a cousin of Geoffrey Fortleigh's had done the wicked deed—in such a way that the Honourable Geoffrey himself was bound to be landed with the crime. When it all came out and the crafty sinner confessed, then, and not sooner, did the innocent man himself appear again after two years of hiding.

Of course, he was a bit of a hero, and the prison people were cruel anxious to hear how the gentleman had got off Dartmoor. But they didn't, for Jimmy's sake; and 'twasn't till a good many years after that the truth came out.

So long-handed is the law, however, that even then I dare say Master Jim would have been locked up for breaking it, but 'twas understood and agreed that no step should be taken against them that succoured the runaway, and before it got to be known, Jimmy was already back at Belliver with his wife and four childer.

He had a very pretty present of money after the murder case was all over, and the real villain of the story changed places with his cousin. And there came a summer day, long afterwards, when the Honourable Geoffrey visited the old scene again, and brought his wife to see the cottage in Laughter Hole where, more dead than alive, he spent that memorable night. But 'twas all in ruins by that time, for when Jimmy left it none ever took it again, and a few Dartmoor winters soon brought the rough place to destruction.

LOVE IN A MIST

By J. E. WHEELWRIGHT

Illustrated by Norah Schlegel

LIEUTENANT GORDON LASCELLES had been sitting over the fire in the billiard-room of the Little Eastington Air Station, brooding, for some twenty minutes. His silences did not often last so long.

"What's up, old chap?" said his friend Osborne, who was at the writing-table in another corner of the room. He had noted the awful pause.

There was no one else in the room.

"Look here, Osborne"—Lascelles seated himself on the fender-seat that ran round the stove, and faced his companion—"you understand these things, being married. What would you do if you had seen the best-looking and most attractive girl you had ever set eyes on in your life, and didn't know who she was, or where she came from, or where she was going, and couldn't get speech with her, and if you couldn't think of anything else by day or night?"

"What *did* you do?" said Osborne.

"Nothing—just stared."

"Masterly inactivity! Did she seem to like it?"

"Well, she was by way of not seeing me at all, but really she couldn't have helped it."

"Didn't look at you at all? That's a good sign—shows she was thinking about you. Where was it?"

"At Victorloo Station."

(Lascelles did not call it Victorloo; this is merely a disguise to put the enemy off the scent.)

"That makes it fairly easy—the old spot by the clock. Couldn't you have dropped your portmanteau on her foot, or hit her with a walking-stick, and apologise?"

"My dear chap, you don't know what you are talking about. Not a bit that sort. She was under armed escort—heavy male relative on one side, heavy female ditto on the other. Male relative was a parson of some sort, with one of those hats tied up round the top with a bit of string."

"And you think she saw you?"

"Don't see how she could have helped it. I put myself in the foreground, and in the middle distance, and the background. They went to the left-luggage office about a box. The escort was making a fearful fuss about this box all over the place. I went and booked a parcel close to Her. My parcel was a single magazine; theirs was a green Willesden canvas cabin trunk, which was missing from the left luggage office. I got simply sick of the sound of that description—Papa boomed it out perpetually like an anthem.

"I went and had tea near, but not too near, them in the refreshment-room. I heard the heavy parent, or whatever he was, say: 'What a number of these young naval lieutenants one sees about. They all seem so much alike. A nice-looking set, tall and fair.'

"'They' were all me, so I must have predominated a bit! Now, Osborne, she did look at me when I wasn't looking at her—I saw that by the looking-glass in the tea-room—and when Papa intoned that remark, she just caught my eye, but only a faint flicker. She tried so hard not to smile, too."

"H'm," said Osborne. "We ought to do something about it, I think. Of course, the obvious course would be to snatch the lady in your arms and bear her off on a prancing charger, but that method is out of date, worse luck! Would you please describe the missing beloved object. Sorry I haven't my note-book with me. Proceed!"

"Tallish, about twenty or so, slim, very elegant and well turned out, hair goldish, eyes like the hair—sort of gold-brown—and a nose with a bit of a tilt, and a tendency to smile easily, awfully nice teeth—absolutely top-hole, all of it!"

"I begin to feel interested in the case."

"Good old Sherlock!" said Lascelles.

"Details of outward apparel?"

"Oh, a dark blue affair with a belt round the middle and a row of buttons all the way down."

"That is what you call a coat-frock," said Osborne.

"Patent-leather boots, whitish-yellow squashy hat."

"Velours," said Osborne.

"Little yellow dog under one arm, all bulgy eyes and moulting hair."

"Pekingese," said Osborne.

"Well, what is to be done? I thought I'd better consult you as an expert."

"It seems difficult at first sight. How did you let her slip?"

"They all hopped into a taxi very suddenly. I was in the middle distance at the moment, so couldn't hear the address."

"The correct method, according to some fiction, is to hail another taxi, leap in, saying: 'Follow that cab, and five pounds is yours. None of your twopenny tips, mind.' The other, and more economical, way is to note the address carefully, and reach by Tube or 'bus. Take steps when you arrive there."

"Well, I did try. I howled for a taxi like a lost dog, but none came. The family were about the station such a long time that they seemed practically settled for the evening, but departed quite suddenly at the end. There was a dickens of a fuss about this lost green box—it had all Mamma's winter thingummies in it."

"I've got it!" Osborne clapped his hands and rubbed them ecstatically. "This intrigues me much. You say you think the damsel was not insensible to your charms?"

"Well, I had a sort of feeling—one has, somehow."

"The Agony Column will be absolutely 'it' for the case. We will write an ad. about the lost green box, designed to catch her eye on the morning of your next leave. When is it—Saturday? Good! We will make it to the effect that a Lieutenant has found a box, and will she come and look at it."

"You'll have to be fearfully careful," said Lascelles; "I don't want the proud prelate and Mamma at my heels. Mamma has a nose and chin like a hook-and-eye, and a mound of white hair. She looked very commanding."

"Dare you risk all?" said Osborne. "Think of those gold-brown eyes!"

"By gum, I dare!" said Lascelles. "But will she ever see it?"

"Girls all read the Agony Column every day," said Osborne.

"And if she turns up, and I meet her, what the dickens am I to say?"

"Good Heavens, man, have you no imagination? Say you've found a blue box, or a pink box, or what-not."

"But she hadn't lost a what-not," said Lascelles miserably.

"A boxful of what-nots, blockhead! You must say you have found a box. You will lead her to it. She will say it is not her box. You will say you are sorry, and make up something about having heard the porters inquiring about it. Bless the boy, I shall have to write the part for you!"

"Do, and hers, too," said Lascelles, with an anxious frown, "otherwise she will never take up my cues. It's all very well for you, who have written plays and acted them. I was brought up as a fox-hunting squire, not a sort of conjuror, to produce green boxes. However," he grinned, "let's get on with it. I'm game."

Thus it came about that the following advertisement appeared on Saturday:

"If the lady, Victorloo Station, blue coat-frock, cream hat, Pekingese, be there Sat. same time, Lieut. will tell her something to advantage *re* lost trunk."

Saturday morning dawned. There was a drifting thick mist and slight frost—a promise of fog in town.

Lascelles was up and having breakfast early, cold and red-nosed, at the Air Station. He shivered when he saw his advertisement in print. Osborne came in to see the patient, as he called him. Osborne lived in married quarters a short way off.

"Buck up, man!" he said *sotto voce*. "You look as anxious as if it were your wedding-day instead of a thrilling love tryst. You are funking it, I believe. Better let me go instead. The weather report is bad. We don't go up to-day, so I could get leave." He looked out, as he spoke, at the mist.

"No, this is my job," said Lascelles, "and my girl."

Later he appeared arrayed in all his glory, in an absolutely new overcoat with shining braid. "Lily of the field;" said Osborne, "you have certainly never toiled, nor spun, nor flown. For a chap who has been invested with a D.S.O., and knocked about a good deal, you look very bright and fair. I should sprinkle some mud and blood about you. You are like a naval officer in a revue. White ducks and boots and a tenor voice. I can see you emerge upon the platform with song and dance in front of a chorus of engine-cleaning ladies with mops. Must make a note of this idea. Enter lovely heroine with dog."

Osborne had a hand in revue writing before he was absorbed by the Air Service.

"I say, now, about this imaginary green box I've found. You must invent some decent story for me—will you?—in case, by any chance, she really does turn up? And make it as true as possible. I've been awake all night thinking what lie I can invent."

"Come here, my boy." Osborne drew Lascelles out into the passage that led to the outer door. There lay a small green canvas trunk. He tapped it with his stick. "There you are. No imaginary trunk, that! Never mind how I got it. As a matter of fact, I know nothing about the box, but I saw it in our motor-shed. I think it must belong to my wife's sister, who is staying with us. All you have to do is to start for Victorloo Station now, take it to some hotel, book a room for the night——"

"Oh, no!" said Lascelles.

"It's all right. You needn't sleep there, but they won't keep the box otherwise. But, don't let anyone go off with it, because it doesn't belong to me. Then, when you meet the fair one at Victorloo, all you have to say is that you have a box at your hotel, which you find—etc., etc., etc.—and hearing that—and so forth and so on—would she care to come and see if it is hers? The hotel had better be a long way off; and if you can't get something started by the time you have got there, you had better chuck the Service and take up knitting."

"I say, this is a fearsome business," said Lascelles.

"Not a bit! Think of those gold-brown eyes, and have faith in your own unfailing smile and well-known charm of manner. Now, then, time is up, and there's the station motor!"

Into the station motor—a solid-looking lorry—Lascelles climbed; the green box went in, too. He took the driver's seat and whirled to Little Eastington Station, three miles away, through a fairly thick mist, at the rate of some forty miles per hour.

And Osborne, slipping into his thickest overcoat and wrapping most of his face up in a white muffler, also departed for the station on a bicycle. Avoiding observation—thanks to the mist, which shrouded his gold buttons somewhat—he caught the same train as Lascelles.

"I must see some of the fun; I may have to act prompter later on," he said to himself, as he got into the train at Little Eastington Station. Arrived at Victorloo, he saw Lascelles nervously putting the green box into a taxi. With a guilty look round, he gave a direction to the porter in attendance.

"What hotel has my friend gone to?" said Osborne, strolling casually up to the porter.

"Wordsworth Hotel," the man said. "Close to the British Museum 'e said it were."

"Nothing to startle anyone in that," commented Osborne. "Cautious fellow, Lascelles! And if the whole family turn up, it will look so respectable, they won't give him in charge, as they otherwise might."

Osborne read the notice, warning persons not to loiter, commenced to loiter carefully, effacing himself as much as possible in the misty gloom of the station.

"Not just the place for lovers' dalliance," he thought, looking round the dim platform and keeping an eye on the main entrance and all around him. It was approaching the appointed hour.

Suddenly he noted the figure of an elderly lady with a pile of white hair surmounted by a buff-coloured hat. On her person was buttoned a dark blue garment, in her arms a Pekingese dog.

"The mother!" said Osborne, in horror. "Take cover!"

The mother was eyeing him through a lorgnette. Dashing to the bookstall, he dived underneath the shelf and came up, like a submarine, beside the astonished damsel in charge, who was absorbed in crochet.

"Hush!" he said, placing a finger on his lips and an arm round her waist. "I am doing this for a wager—an important naval manœuvre. A great deal depends on it. Not a word!" He beamed on the girl. She was startled, but smiled. All was well.

"Go on, with your sauce," she said. "You can stay here a few minutes, if you are doing a bolt, but you get out when you're told. You and your brass buttons! If you like to mind the shelf a minute, I can stretch me legs outside." She was off. Osborne observed her bestowing attentions on an elderly porter.

From his shady nook he could watch the lady with the big nose, white hair, and Pekingese, pace up and down, the lorgnette, like a searchlight, turning its rays hither and thither. Just then Osborne became aware of other ladies—several ladies—all dressed in dark blue frocks, and all of them led, carried, drove, or dragged some kind of yellow hairy dog, more or less a Pekingese. Osborne laughed softly.

"We never realised what a uniform a blue frock and a Pekingese dog are," he said. He looked and looked for gold-brown eyes. None of the ladies answered in the least to Lascelles' glowing description. "I wish I could warn him without being caught," he groaned. "This uniform does give one away. Ah-h-h!"

There was Lascelles approaching, all unaware of the doom that lay before him.

He swung into the station. There was a general movement of ladies and dogs towards him. But the white-haired one—the mother—was first. She veered round him in circles some moments, then, like a coward, approached him from the rear and gave him a sharp prod with her umbrella. He turned quickly. She spoke to him at some length. Lascelles became a deep, dark red. He turned and led the way gloomily, the elasticity gone from his step, out of the station. The white-haired one followed, still voluble. The outside mist absorbed them. There was mist, but no real fog.

"Heavens!" groaned Osborne. "I've sent poor old Lascelles box-hunting with the heavy mother to the Wordsworth Hotel! Bad luck! Now I must escape!"

He saw that the other crestfallen ladies with dogs had seen the meeting of the Lieutenant and the grey-haired one, and, seeing it, they had slowly, sadly faded away.

Osborne wondered: Had they all lost boxes? What a——

But what was this?

Into the circle of light made by the bookstall lamps came a girl, like a moth attracted by candle flames—a beautiful golden-brown moth. Osborne feasted his eyes at leisure on the face. She could not see him; he was in the obscurity of the bookstall. She was a beautiful thing—gold-brown hair, gold-brown eyes, tall and slim, exquisite complexion, pale and clear. Blue coat-frock, he could see, down to the waist. Above the waist, with eyes a-goggle, Pekingese dog. "That must be she," he said to himself, and ticked the various points off on his fingers.

"No mistake about this, anyway," thought Osborne. "Young Lascelles knows a good thing when he sees it. I had doubts, but this settles it."

He wondered if the girl had really noticed Lascelles, and would remember him, and if she had read the advertisement. Would she take him for Lascelles? He was darker than Lascelles, and had a bigger nose, but both were tall.

He wound the muffler well round the chin, dragged the peak of his cap over his eyes, and, leaning well forward over the books, smiled his sweetest smile—alas, concealed by the muffler—and said—

"Would you care to buy this paper? There are some good things in the Agony Column!"

He placed his thumbnail under his own advertisement.

The girl looked up, startled, and gazed into his face with silent surprise; then her eye fell on the advertisement, and from that to the gold bands on his sleeve. Her face crimsoned. She played with a magazine on the ledge in front of her, looking down and evidently trying hard not to smile.

The effort was a failure. The smile burst out, likewise a small laugh.

"I'm looking for my mother," she said rather feebly at last.

"Not for a lieutenant, by any chance?" he said. "Because there is one, at your service."

"Yes, a lieutenant and a box. My mother saw the advertisement, and said it was meant for her. She said I was to wait for her in the waiting-room while she found the box and the lieutenant. I am waiting, but the waiting-room was dull."

"I can explain," said Osborne. "This is where I come in," he thought.

"Come and have some tea in the refreshment-room."

She shivered. It was a dismal afternoon hour, and gloomier than ever.

"It would be very warming and comforting," she said, looking at the lighted refreshment-room.

They went in and sat down. "Now tell me about the box," she said.

"Presently. Tea first," he answered.

She looked bewildered. "I wonder where mother is?" she queried.

"I can tell you," said Osborne. "She has gone off in quest of the box with a friend of mine." Here he unwound the disguise, and his peaked cap resumed its normal angle. He removed the cap.

"Then you aren't——" she said, half rising and looking doubtfully at Osborne.

"No, I'm not the young man who heard you lose your box on Monday."

This was a random shot. He watched the effect. "You saw him, didn't you? A good-looking fair chap?"

"Yes, I saw him—very good-looking and very fair." "That's good for Lascelles," thought Osborne.

"He saw you, too—saw you looking for



"Between them they carried the green Willesden canvas

your box, I mean. He is a friend of mine —a chap called Lascelles. He's looking for the box now, with your mother. Have some tea!"

"But I can't think——"

"Don't try! Here's cake, and here's tea coming. Don't worry."

"I won't." She did not. In fact, she really seemed in no way distressed about anything, and enjoyed her tea. They were getting on very well both with tea and conversation.

"Do you know, I'm married!" he had just informed her.

"Extraordinary! Eve!" said a surprised voice behind them.

It was the ecclesiastical father.

"Hullo, father!" said Miss Gold-eyes. "Will you come and have some tea? May I introduce——"

"Lieutenant Osborne, at your service," said Osborne, standing at attention.

"Your mother, Eve?"

"She'll be back in a minute; she's gone to look for the box."

"Extraordinary! You don't say so? Gone where?" he asked.

Eve and Osborne looked at each other interrogatively.

"Shall we go and help?" he suggested. "I believe they have gone to the Wordsworth Hotel."



cabin trunk . . . Suddenly he caught sight of Osborne."

"Extraordinary, rahly!" said the reverend gentleman. Osborne soon discovered he very seldom said anything else, and thereby gained a great name for wisdom.

"Your mother requested me, Eve, to meet her here this afternoon at four o'clock, to help her to receive the box which was—er—at—er—um——" Here he became absent; he was clearly rather vague as to the box episode. His mind was attuned to higher things.

"I think we must go and see what we can do," said Osborne. "This is getting complicated," he said to himself. "I must keep them moving a bit, otherwise I shall have to sit here and explain. And I'm hanged if I know what to explain till I have seen Lascelles! I must try and lose them somehow, if Lascelles doesn't come back."

"Follow me," he said mysteriously, when he had paid for the tea, leading them out into the gloom and mist of the entrance platform again.

Joy! There, emerging from a Tube subway among others, like wasps out of a wasps' nest, came Eve's mother and Lascelles. Between them they carried the green Willesden canvas cabin trunk. Panting, they dropped it with a bang. Lascelles looked round with a despairing expression—hope had died from his face.

Suddenly he caught sight of Osborne. A look of vast relief spread over his comely countenance, followed by an obvious suffusion of blood to the head as he recognised Eve. Then his eye fell on Papa, and he seemed to shrink into himself again.

Osborne hurried forward to gain the ear of Lascelles, while the family bent over the box.

"Buck up!" he said in a rapid whisper. "Her name's Eve, and she thinks you are awfully good-looking. She does seem to have noticed you, anyway. I haven't committed you in any way about the box. I leave it to you to speak."

"This is rather awful," said Lascelles. "The mother says it *is* her box, and sticks to it. She talks so much she won't listen to anything, and insisted on bringing it back here. I couldn't let it out of my sight. Who knows what is in it? It may be full of family spoons, or lost wills, or something. Heaven help us! Do get it away from the old lady, and let me have a word with Her."

There seemed to be a pause. Lascelles moved nearer Eve.

Osborne began: "Madam, we are so glad——"

Madam never let anyone else speak, if she could prevent it. She interrupted.

"This young man has been most obliging," she said, "and has very cleverly traced my lost box to the Wordsworth Hotel. How, he says he will explain later."

She beamed upon Lascelles, who beamed in return—he had obtained a few words with Eve. It was a nervous, flickering beam, and most of it lighted on Eve. Eve looked serene and angelic.

The reverend Papa came out of a reverie—he was given to abstraction. He now came to earth and said—

"Rahly! Extraordinary! Yes, my dear, the missing box, so there it is! Rahly!"

He had found that these suitable ejaculations met almost every case.

"You don't say so?" he continued, seeing more was expected of him. He was a pink and clean-looking person, with kind blue eyes and crisp curls.

Papa and Mamma lowered their noses and eyeglasses close to the surface of the box again.

"Now slip off with the girl, and I'll finish the job," Osborne whispered to Lascelles.

"Would you care to come and have some tea?" the latter said to Eve, displaying splendid rows of teeth.

Osborne frowned. "Not tea again," he was going to say—"any teetotal drink but tea."

But the girl also displayed bewitching rows of teeth and said—

"Yes, I should like some tea."

"Healthy appetite!" muttered Osborne.

The refreshment-room doors closed behind them.

Papa and Mamma straightened their backs again. "Yes, it is my box," said Mamma.

"You don't say so?" said Papa.

Mamma embarked upon the history of the box, commencing with its purchase in the year 1912.

Osborne thought to himself: "This complicates matters. The mother thinks the box really is hers. I must not let the mother remove the box belonging to my wife's sister."

"Madam, I presume you have the key?" he said, breaking into the lady's story.

"The key is here," she said, producing about fifty in a bunch and inserting one in the lock. To Osborne's amazement, it turned easily. She threw it open. They all peered in. On the extreme surface, on tissue-paper, lay a long tail of grey hair, commonly known as a switch; beside it nestled three grey curls on pins. What other spare parts might have been revealed history does not say, for Mamma hastily closed the box.

"Those are mine," she snapped.

"They certainly are," murmured the Dean.

"My godfather!" said Osborne. "How did that happen?"

"I beg your pardon!" from the Dean, for Dean he was.

Just at this moment a train, which had wound its slow and devious way from Little Eastington and about fifty other hamlets, drew noisily up at the platform and began to disgorge passengers near the gate where they stood. Osborne raised his eyes. Through the barrier, advancing in their direction, came his wife and the sister of his wife.

"Is that you, Dick?" cried his wife, astonished.

"Yes," said Dick Osborne, "it is."

"And the box?" she questioned, indicating the trunk.

"And the box?" echoed the sister.

"Yes, here we are, and the box." Osborne spoke brightly, waiting for a cue, rather mystified.

"How did you know about it?" the two new-comers asked in a breath, turning to Osborne. Osborne for once was dumb.

"It was good of you to take it up," said his wife. "Is it your box, then?" she

continued, looking at the mother, who was standing over it like a dog defending a bone.

"Yes, indeed, it is," she answered.

Mrs. Osborne looked inquiringly at her husband, who was still mute, and assumed an impenetrable air, but felt absolutely at sea.

"I am so glad it has found its rightful owner. You see," Mrs. Osborne continued, "I came up to town the other day, and bought a supply of onions and potatoes, and brought an empty trunk to take them home in. I booked it at the left luggage place till I could conveniently fetch it. It was a green cabin trunk like this one. Then I came up to town in a great hurry, saw what I thought was my trunk, just on the spot I had left it, gave a porter the left luggage office ticket, and he went and got a green box for me. Everyone was in a hurry, so it was flung into the train. When I arrived home, I found it wasn't mine. I put it in the motor-shed, waiting for a car to fetch it. I looked for it to-day, to bring it back, and, behold, it was gone! But I had not mentioned it to my husband. How did you know, Dick?"

"We fellows have to know everything," he said darkly. "In the Service you have to keep your eyes and ears open."

"Extraordinary, rahly!" said the Dean. "You don't say so?"

"I must go and see if I can find my own box of onions now," said Mrs. Osborne.

They all moved to the left luggage office. Mamma began to talk again, so no one else spoke.

"What an amazing piece of luck that I brought this box, which I took to be a family trunk, for this jaunt!" thought Osborne. "All this subterfuge has been wasted. We might have gone straight to work without any mental torment for poor old Lascelles. It seems like Fate."

A jaded and tired clerk was prevailed upon to give them his attention at the office for a few moments. He seemed vaguely to remember a Dean and a commotion about a green box. He produced many forms to fill up, when a second lost green box was clamoured for and no ticket was forthcoming. Probably he reflected that green was an unlucky colour. Pink forms and yellow forms were produced, and a stump of well-licked pencil.

Some of the persons present gave their names, addresses, and any other interesting details they could think of, on the form. Osborne made a note of the Dean's name—Faulkner—the Very Rev.

"Describe contents of box herein," said the clerk.

"Onions and so forth," wrote Osborne.

"Why, there it is!" said Violet Osborne, suddenly pointing to a green box just inside the barrier.

"Do open it and see; it isn't locked."

The porter opened it.

There they lay, cosily embedded—onions, potatoes, haricot beans.

"Can't let you have it to-night," said the porter. "Against regulations. Next, please!"

They all turned sadly away.

"Just wait! I'm going to tell Lascelles it is all right," said Osborne. He sped off into the misty station.

"Where is Eve all this time?" said Mamma.

"Yes, where is Eve?" said the Dean. "Extraordinary!"

Osborne found Eve—also Lascelles.

They were gazing at each other ecstatically over teapots and food, but did not seem to be taking any nourishment, both leaning well forward, much absorbed.

Lascelles caught sight of Osborne, and rose to meet him.

"Look here, Osborne, not so much of this espionage business," he said. "Leave us—we would be alone!"

"And this is my reward for playing the match-making mother to you all this blessed afternoon! You have me and the mist to thank for your present bliss. If it hadn't been for the fog, I should have been buzzing about overhead, and you would probably have been arrested for theft. In the meantime, fly! All is discovered!"

"No?" said Lascelles, starting.

"Yes; but everyone is very happy. Both ladies are supplied with green boxes to specification."

"Both?" said Lascelles, mystified.

"Yes. They're all there—my family has suddenly arrived. How are you getting on?"

"Top-hole!" said Lascelles. "They are all coming down to the station on Saturday to tea and to see the place, and she is going to take a part in the theatricals at the Y.M.C.A. hut. They are all coming to that, too, and you are going to put them up."

"But I've no cathedral or anything down at Little Eastington to put a Church dignitary into," said Osborne, aghast. "You are a cool hand!"

"I say, we mustn't leave Eve sitting there alone while we whisper," said Lascelles. "But one thing more," he went on. "Will you do me a good turn?"

"What! More of them?"

"Yes. Write in a good strong love part for us in the play you're doing for the theatricals—proposal and so on. Not too many words, because there won't be much of a rehearsal."

"I see the idea—you and she in the limelight. 'Will you be mine?' Long embrace—curtain! All right."

"I can do it if I know beforehand what to say, and you're such a dab at all that."

"Consider it done," said Osborne, with a heavy thump on his friend's back.

"Awfully sorry," said Lascelles, going back to Eve, "but there was some important work to arrange. Shall we join the others?"

The three rejoined the group, the members of which were chatting amicably.

They all parted the best of friends. "So we shall meet again," they said, as the Little Eastington party climbed into the 5.45.

Osborne was mysteriously missing; but just as the train was moving, he jumped in.

"I wish I had my onions!" sighed his wife.

"You have," he panted—"in the van."

"But how——"

"I just leant over the barrier and took it—it isn't heavy. I asked the man—he was about eighty: 'Can you run?' He answered, 'No, sir.' I said, 'I can!' and ran with it."

"But the forms?"

"Still in my pocket.

But young Lascelles gazed out of the window abstracted, beaming. Green boxes were nothing to him.

* * * * *

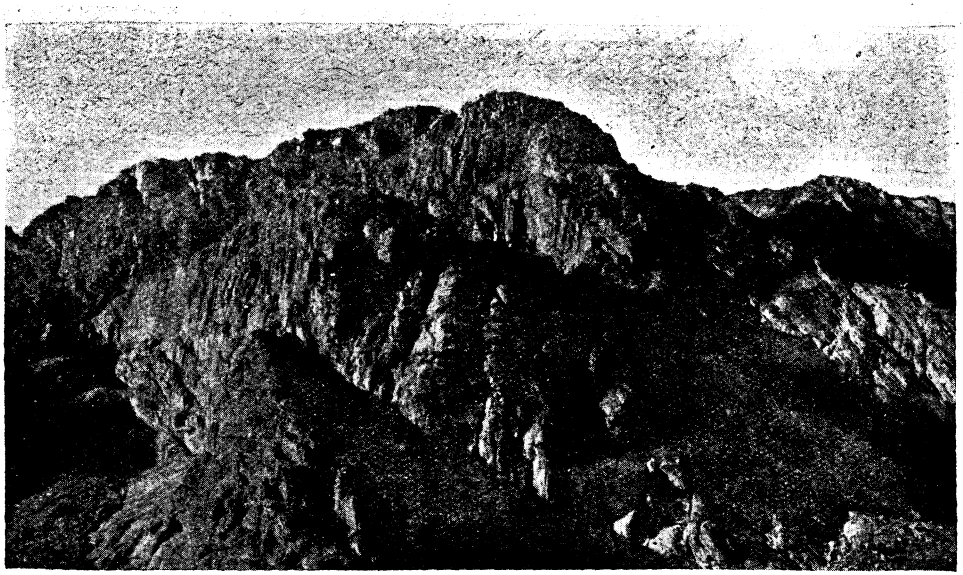
The theatricals were an enormous success. The love scene between Lascelles and Eve absolutely brought down the house—it was such a success, in fact, that the hero and heroine took an encore.

But the encore was not given to the public, but in a dim and echoing gallery, and this time there was no applause, because there was absolutely no one else there.



EVENING IN THE WOODLAND.

BY BIRKET FOSTER.



THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT SINAI.

ANZAC SOLDIERS AMONG FAMOUS BIBLE SCENES

By TROOPER BLUEGUM

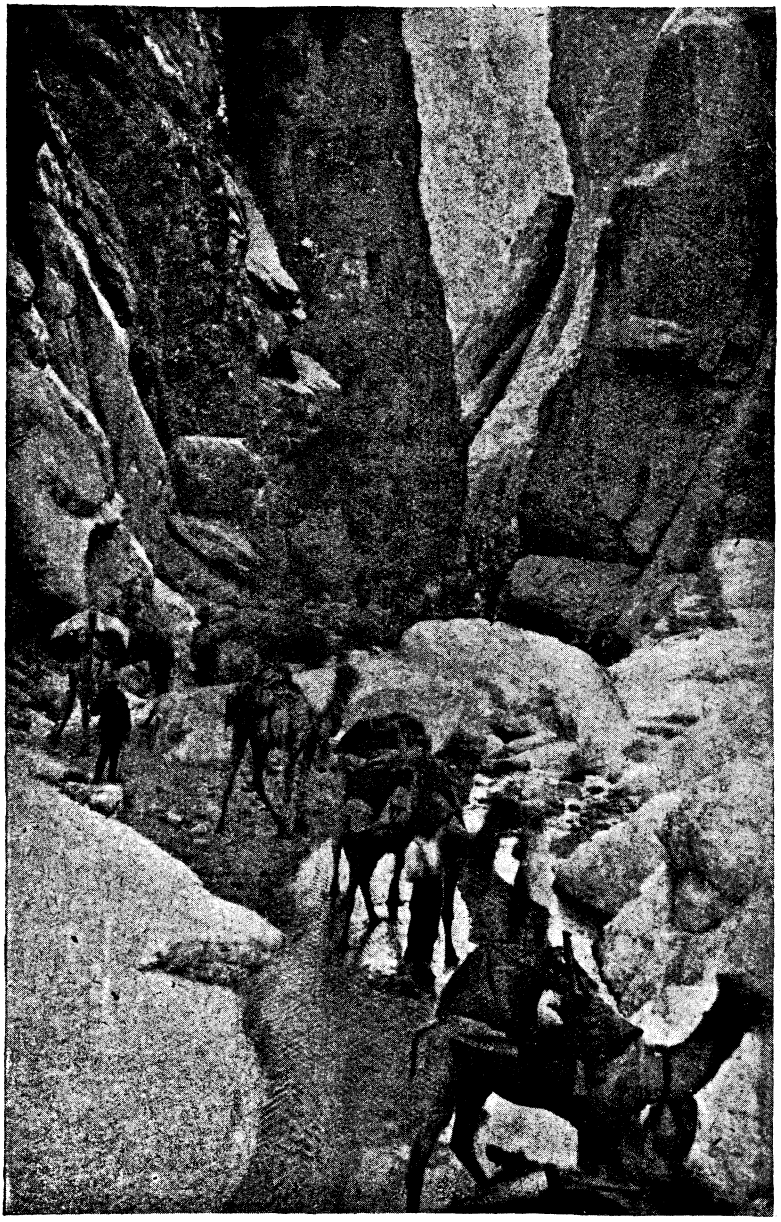
TWENTIETH-CENTURY crusaders, following the long-obliterated tracks of King Richard and Godfrey, have driven the Turk out of Southern Palestine and once more captured the Holy City for Christendom. To-day Britons from the ends of the earth congregate in historic Jerusalem, visit the Holy Sepulchre, ascend the Mount of Olives, or stand bareheaded before Calvary.

From ancient Cairo to Jerusalem is classic ground. Almost every mile has its historic incident, its sacred memory; and as the New Crusaders win their way towards final victory, their daily tasks are redeemed from the commonplace by the regimental padres, who from their inexhaustible fund of Old and New Testament story link present with past. Here went Joseph and Mary and the Infant Christ; here Moses was found in the Nile rushes; there lived Samson; here Abraham and Isaac; there David and Solomon; yonder, 'neath the setting sun, was the Israelites' Land of Bondage; there the Wilderness; here the Promised Land.

In Egypt and Palestine the places of Biblical interest are not very difficult of access, and have been identified by archæologists with a considerable degree of certainty; but in the wilderness of Sinai there remains but little trace of the long sojourn of the Israelites. To this day students are not agreed as to where the fugitives from Pharaoh actually crossed the Red Sea; neither is it definitely decided which is the actual Mount Sinai where Moses received the Ten Commandments.

There is no doubt that at one period of their wanderings the Israelites did sojourn in the interior of Sinai. Here, amongst the rugged mountains, hidden away in the numberless wadies, are still several thousands of irregulars, untouched by civilisation, living the same nomadic life that their forefathers did thousands of years ago. As a fighting force these are quite a negligible quantity. Still, they do understand the art of the ambuscade, and at odd times scouts and small patrols have been sniped at from the hills, and a few officers and men have been killed and wounded. The chief danger to

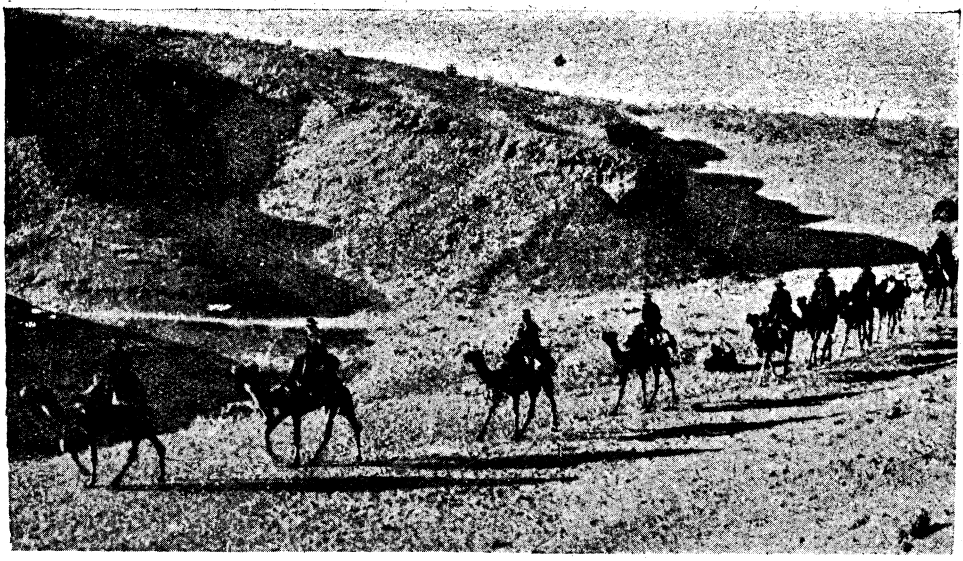
be feared from these irregulars lies mainly in their ability to give information to the Turks. Some of them are sympathetically disposed towards Britain and the Egyptian Government; some, having heard the clink of German gold, are antipathetic. The majority are quite apathetic, and will go in whichever direction the fear or cupidity of their sheikh dictates.



A NARROW GORGE ON CENTRAL SINAI.

In the early days of the War the Turks overran Sinai, even to the bounds of the Red Sea, and the irregulars, imagining the Crescent to be in the ascendant, gladly accepted Turkish rifles and ammunition and German gold. But as the War dragged on, the Turks were thrown back across the border into Palestine. Light horse and camel patrols scoured the wilderness, gathering in the Turkish rifles and any irregulars who showed active hostility; and as the Crescent waned, the apathetic irregulars developed a new loyalty to the Union Jack. But away amongst the mountains of Southern Sinai were still a few hundred Turkish rifles and a few thousand irregulars who needed convincing of the error of their ways. So a strong patrol of Anzac cameleers meandered amongst the mountains, to collect Turkish rifles, etc.

Now, in the course of their peregrinations the cameleers happened upon the ancient convent at Jebel Mousa, and for the period of their brief halt there were transformed from soldiers into pilgrims. It has already been stated that some difference of opinion exists as to which is the actual Mount Sinai where Moses received the Law. Students and scientists are divided on the subject, and four mountain peaks have claims on the honour. The



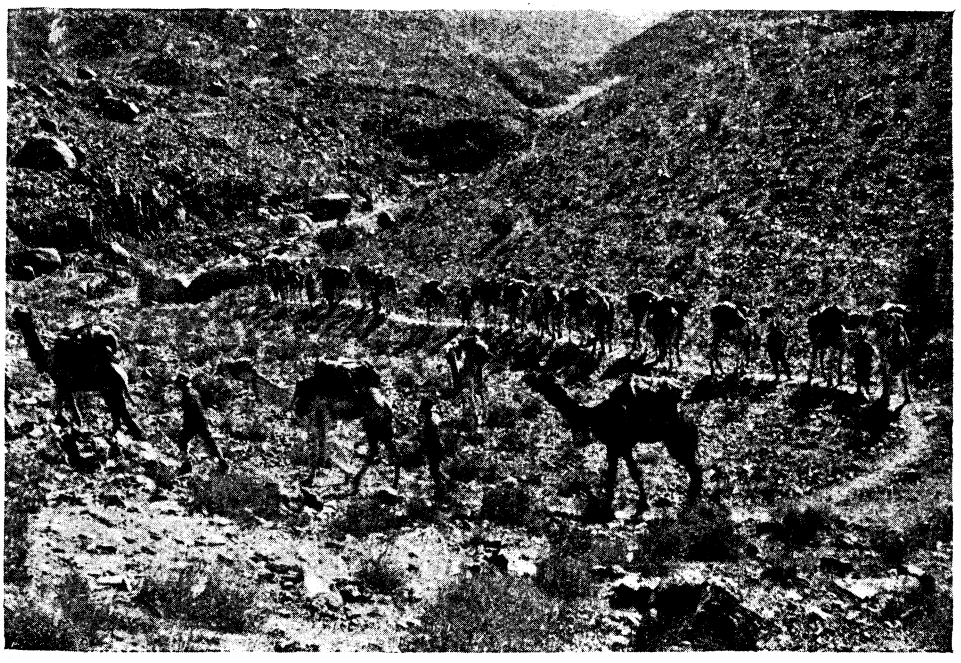
ON TREK.

consensus of erudite opinion, however, is that either Jebel Mousa (Moses' Mount) or Jebel Serbal is the actual site. The Anzac pilgrims lay claim to no great erudition, but without prejudice accept the verdict of most of the British, French, and Greek archæologists in favour of Jebel Mousa. Two potent reasons for this decision are—

First: At Jebel Serbal there is no place amongst the barren hills for the Israelites to have camped to receive the Law, while at the foot of Jebel Mousa are wells and open pasture lands admirably adapted for a great encampment.

Second: The ancient Greek Church, having no doubts on the subject, dogmatically affirmed that Jebel Mousa was the spot, and here founded, early in the fourth century, the famous Convent of St. Katharina.

Our first view of Jebel Mousa showed a



NEAR THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT SINAI.

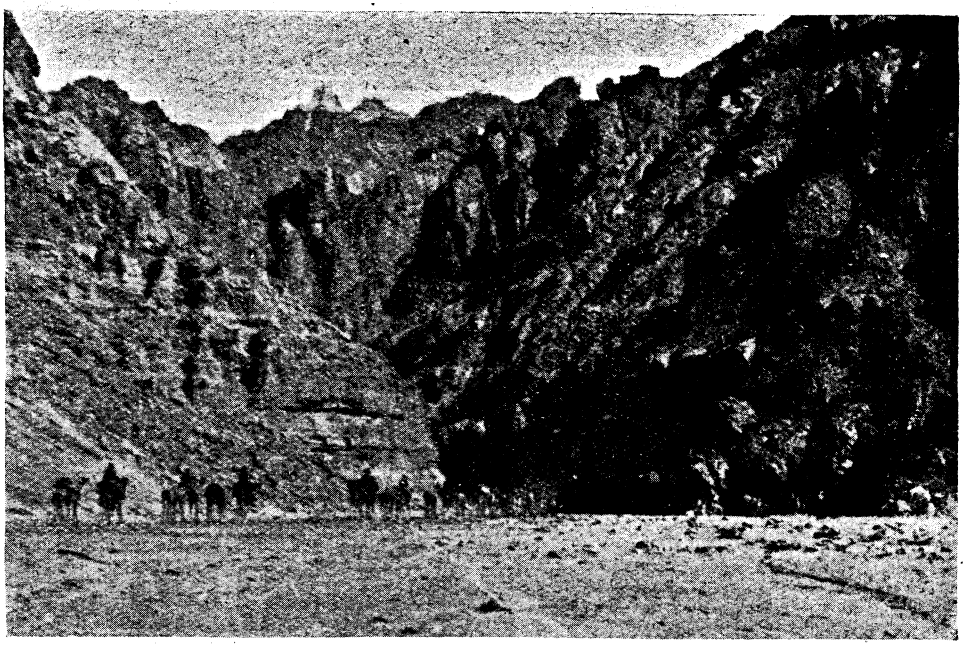
high, rugged mountain crowned with fleecy clouds which effectually obscured the peak. Even so must it have been when Moses ascended and received the Ten Commandments. When we arrived at the foot of the mount, however, the clouds had disappeared, and the rugged mount stood boldly outlined against a cloudless sky. At the summit had been erected a cross, the symbol of Christianity. Jebel Mousa rears its crest about six thousand feet above the level of the sea, and, it being mid-winter at the time of the visit, our canvas water-buckets contained lumps of ice instead of water at reveille.

The Convent of Jebel Mousa, founded about 1600 years ago, was completed by the Emperor Justinian. It is the repository of some of the oldest Greek, Syrian, Arabic, and Hebrew manuscripts and Bibles in the world, and, because of its sacred associations, it is surely one of the most interesting spots on the earth's surface. The little chapel is a blaze of splendour. The religious fervour and zeal of priests and pilgrims throughout the centuries have resulted in the creation of some magnificent works of art and the collection of many priceless relics. Quaint old pictures depict various incidents in the lives of the Prophets and the Apostles. Many are devoted to Moses and Aaron and the Children of Israel. There are gorgeous vestments sewn with silk and pearls. Ancient caskets contain the mummified head and hand of St. Katharina, the former having a golden tiara, the hand being adorned with curious gold rings and bracelets. Amongst the effigies that of St. Katharina commanded instant flattering attention from the pilgrims. The lower portion of the body was draped with solid silver. The bodice was beaten gold. The face was enamelled and surmounted by a golden crown blazing with diamonds and emeralds and sapphires and rubies. In the recess under the altar was the alleged spot where Moses saw the burning bush, and here were richly-bound Bibles, beautiful mosaics, inlaid ivory and mother-o'-pearl ornaments, rich tapestries, old paintings, and many ancient relics. There seemed to be no end to the wonderful things hidden away in this most inaccessible monastery.

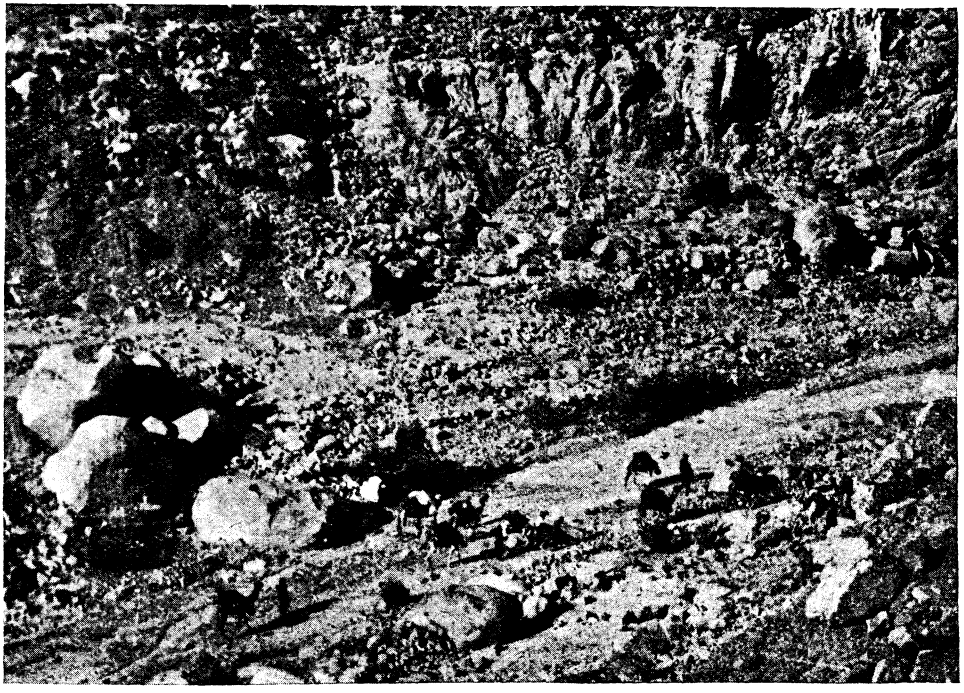


THE CONVENT OF ST. KATHARINA ON THE SIDE OF MOUNT SINAI—JEBEL MOUSA, CENTRAL SINAI.

Other items there were not so beautiful. In a dungeon, piled high in horrible incongruity, were hundreds of skeletons, and, beyond, a golgotha where were stacked the skulls of all the priests who had lived and died at Jebel Mousa. On a chair at the door sat Stephanas, the doorkeeper, in the same spot that he had occupied for a couple of hundred years. He had expressed a wish to remain at his post when he died, so when he was killed at his post his body was never removed. These and many other strange sights were shown the travellers by Father



ENTRANCE TO WADI ISLEH.



ASCENT OF THE WADI.

Polycarpus, the priest in charge. A few old skeletons in the corner of the charnel house provoked a query, and the priest informed us that they were the remains of *visitors* who had died there.

There are not many visitors to Jebel Mousa. The cost of the journey is prohibitive, the road or, rather, track is so rugged and precipitous, and the mount is so difficult of access. Time and again the pilgrims, both going to and coming from the monastery, had to dismount and lead their horses over boulders and mountain paths so rugged that they seemed impassable. At night it was bitterly cold. Heavy thunderstorms at times drenched the cameleers, and though for a time it solved the water problem, it made travelling more difficult. Camels, used to the dry, sandy desert, slithered and slipped helplessly over the slimy beds of the flooded wadies. Eventually, however, and without any misadventure, the pilgrim patrol, after a six-hundred-mile trek, left the wilderness behind and camped once more on the green fields of Palestine.

CHIVALRY, 1918.

By LIEUTENANT GEOFFREY FYSON.

ONCE, in the olden days, when men were bold
And women fair, each knight would kneel before
His lady, vowing fealty—we are told—
Before he rode to war.

Dear, Fate has forced our footsteps far apart;
I may no homage pay you ere I go,
And though your seal is graved upon my heart,
You do not know.

Yet once we traversed an enchanted land,
Once 'neath this elm I touch we held our tryst,
And heart was locked to heart as hand to hand,
While young lips kissed.

So, in the moonlight and the mystery
Of shadow'd trees, I pledge me in the fight
Never to falter, striving still to be
Your perfect knight.

THE WINDOW

By J. B. HARRIS-BURLAND

Illustrated by Arthur Garratt

IT was once said of Jeston that he was an "acquired taste," and I think that, so far as it was possible to describe Jeston at all in two words, the criticism was just and accurate. One speaks thus of caviare, and oysters, and the works of certain great painters and writers, and all these are very excellent things. It is the first attempt to swallow them that is the difficulty; but if one has the courage to make the initial effort, one is in time amply repaid for one's perseverance, and one has the very pleasant experience of feeling that one has lifted oneself out of the common herd, and I don't know anything more gratifying than that, even in small matters.

Well, I think it was like that about Jeston. An ugly man, harsh and repellent to most people, curiously uncertain in his attitude—even towards his few friends—he was not at all the sort of person that attracted strangers. He was set round with all sorts of little barriers, very much like the barbed wire with which he had surrounded his garden. And yet there was something very attractive about Jeston, if one chose to search for it. He was, as a rule, horribly reticent and *difficile*, and—I think you will understand the term—inaccessible; but he was never sensitive, or ill-tempered, or mean. One could say just what one liked to him, and he took no offence. I do not believe he was thick-skinned, but he was calm and hard and inscrutable. You could no more hurt him with a sneer or an ill-natured remark than you could damage a granite rock with a pin. He talked very little, but to sit in silence with him was like sitting in the cold twilight of some cathedral; one felt that one was in touch with something one did not quite understand—something one would like to understand.

Well, this was the effect Jeston had on me, and, to my certain knowledge, it was the effect he had on Portington, who was a musician—a human instrument very sensitive to the touch, and not in the least like myself. I am an electrical engineer, and a very matter-of-fact, prosaic person. There is, of course, a certain romance about electricity, but nothing very interesting about those who earn their living by it. You will understand, therefore, that Jeston appealed to two men of a very different type.

And then there was Jeston's smoking-room. I shall always think of Jeston in the particular setting of that room. Garling painted him in it, and, as I do not suppose you have ever seen the picture, though it is the very best thing that Garling ever did, I will describe it to you. As a central figure there is, of course, Jeston, pipe in mouth, and a faint blue spiral of smoke, hardly visible, ascending from the bowl. He is wearing a loose, rather ill-fitting lounge suit of some dark material. His clean-shaven, sallow face is lit up by the sun streaming through the window, and he is looking out of the window at the garden. The whole figure is small in comparison with the size of the picture, the idea of the artist being evidently to include as much of the room as possible, and not merely to paint a portrait of Jeston.

Then there is an odd background of brilliant red wall, and the artist has shown, very cleverly, in my opinion, that the wall is not covered with red paper, but with some substance that catches and reflects the light. As a matter of fact, the walls of Jeston's smoking-room are panelled with lacquered wood. Two or three prints in black frames are visible. The floor is of some brown polished wood, and one can see portions of three Oriental rugs. The chair in which Jeston sits is large, curious in shape, and decorated with black and gold lacquer.

All this, as you may imagine, produces a very unusual effect, but there is no suggestion of eccentricity. The room is obviously not the room of a man bitten with a craze for startling his friends. It seems quite natural

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that Jeston should be in such surroundings. His face has the calm inscrutability of the Oriental, and the very ugliness of it is not unlike the ugliness, to Western eyes, of the Chinaman. Jeston is, I may tell you, an Englishman, and his family is an old and honoured one. But before he came to live at Horton he had spent fifteen years in a remote part of China, and possibly he had acquired some of the characteristics of the natives with whom he was brought in contact. In any case, he seems to fit into the picture as Garling painted it. But Garling has painted a Jeston that I never knew. To me there was always an air of expectancy about Jeston, as though he were waiting for something.

Then Garling, who, as you know, loves contrasts of colour, has managed to get in nearly the whole of the large window at right angles to the wall. There are three lights in the window, and the mullions are of wood, lacquered red, and through the window one can see the vivid green of an English garden on a summer's day—a smooth lawn and a yew hedge, and beyond it great trees, and through an opening in the trees a patch of sunlit meadow-land, and in the distance a line of hills—all so thoroughly English, you understand, and so queer, seen out of that very Eastern room.

And the picture — I thought this an affectation on the part of the artist when I first saw it—was called, not "A Portrait of Guy Jeston, Esq.," but "The Window."

I very well remember the evening when Jeston first showed me the picture, which he had hung in his dining-room. He merely said, "This might interest you," and when I had praised the workmanship of it, I noticed the gilt slip underneath.

"'The Window'?" I queried.

"Why not?" he said sharply.

"Is that your idea, Jeston?" I asked.

"No," he answered curtly.

I said it was an affectation on Garling's part — a desire to excite comment — the problem picture idea, you know.

"Garling is not that kind of man at all," he said quietly. "And there *is* a window in the picture."

"It's all nonsense," I protested.

"Very likely, Taverner," he said, speaking as one might speak to an argumentative child. "It's of no importance."

But the next time I saw the picture—a week later—the label had been removed. I made no comment on the fact, but I was pleased to think that my opinion carried some weight with Jeston. As a rule, he did not respect anyone's opinion but his own.

A month after the removal of the label I called to see Jeston about six o'clock in the evening. I was shown into the smoking-room, and the maid-servant said that she would find "the master." A few moments later I saw her crossing the lawn. A good deal of the garden lay out of sight beyond the yew hedge, and I supposed that Jeston was down by the river, two hundred yards from the house. I had often sat there with him in a small Chinese pagoda sort of summer-house. He kept a boat against the landing-stage, but he very rarely used it, though the property on the further bank belonged to him. "It is there," he said, "in case I want to go to the other side. There is no bridge for miles."

Well, as I saw the servant cross the lawn, I was sorry that I had sent her to fetch Jeston. I could just as easily have gone out myself to find him. It had been a very warm day in London, almost cloudless, and without a breath of wind. It would have been pleasant to sit down there by the river, and watch the swallows skim over the surface, and the sedge swaying in the stream. Jeston was a capital companion when one was tired after a hard day's work —he so rarely spoke unless one asked him a question. It would certainly be very jolly down there with him by the river. I moved a step nearer to the window, so that I could call out to the servant.

And then suddenly Garling's picture came into my mind. I was looking at the view from precisely the same angle as the painter must have looked at it. The black chair was almost in the same position. The light in the sky was almost the same. I stood there and tried to imagine that I was Garling—I tried, in fact, to put myself in Garling's place—taking in the whole composition of the picture. Certainly it would never have occurred to me to call my painting of the scene "The Window." I might have been too unconventional simply to label it "Portrait of Guy Jeston." I might have called it "The Red Room," or "The Black Chair," or "East and West" —anything, in fact, except "The Window." Certainly Garling was an odd fellow. Or was it Garling's idea, after all? Perhaps Jeston had suggested the title; but it was not the sort of thing that Jeston would do. I could picture him sitting in that chair, and never speaking a word, hour after hour, taking no interest in Garling or his work,

looking on the whole business as rather foolish waste of time.

I walked up to the window and studied it carefully. Of the three lights, each about eight feet high by thirty inches broad, only the centre one opened. It was on hinges, like a casement or a French window. The sill was low, not more, I should say, than eighteen inches from the floor. The big panes of glass were of a very ordinary character. It was, in fact, a very ordinary window, save for the red lacquer on the mullions and framework. Even the view from it was quite unremarkable, whereas the room itself, and Jeston, and his chair, would all be very distinctive features in any picture. I placed my right hand on one of the mullions, and leant forward a little, watching the end of the yew hedge for Jeston to appear. There was a faint, curious smell, and I looked down at the small flower bed under the window, wondering what plant had that particular odour. But I could see nothing except geraniums that matched almost exactly the colour of the red lacquer on the walls.

Then Jeston appeared, and I waved my hand to him, and drew back from the window, and as I moved my right hand the flesh seemed to come away unwillingly from the woodwork, and I looked at my palm and fingers. There was no mark on them, but the red lacquer showed clearly the print of my fingers. The skin of the lacquer was not quite dry. It was just soft enough to take the impression of my hand.

"That's odd," I said aloud, for it did not seem to me at all likely that Jeston had had the framework of the window touched up. It was, indeed, hardly possible that he would be able to find any workman to do the job. Then I looked up and saw Jeston walking quickly across the lawn. He was wearing an ill-fitting suit of black, perhaps the very one in which he had sat for his picture.

"I'm afraid I've marked your paint," I said, when he entered the room. "It's hardly dry, is it?"

"Paint?" he queried. "Oh, you mean the lacquer? The window? Oh, yes. The servant ought to have warned you."

He went up to the window and looked at the mark. I apologised again, and he insisted that the fault was entirely his own.

"Show me your hand," he said, and I held it out for his inspection. He bent his head and examined my palm and fingers closely.

"Quite clean," he said, after a pause. "Quite clean."

I laughed, and then I asked him who had done the work, and where he had found the paint that had all the finish of fine red lacquer.

"Not ordinary enamel paint, of course?" I said.

No, it was genuine lacquer, and he had learnt the art in China. A tedious job—coat after coat. He seated himself in his black armchair and explained something of the process—how each coat was allowed to dry, how it was polished with deer's horn ashes and oil, or charcoal—a long, painstaking job—twenty coats in all.

"And one has to be careful," he said. "The stuff is poisonous—a cut on the finger—a scratch—that is why I looked carefully at your hand."

"Do you mean," I asked, "that it would kill a man?"

"Hardly that," he answered. "But it would cause a gathering—in bad cases an illness. One has to be careful."

I seated myself on a low, comfortable couch covered with Oriental embroideries. The sun, low in the west, shone through the gap in the trees and gilded one side of Jeston's grim, ugly face. The other side was in dark shadow. His pipe was in his mouth. The walls were half red flame and half a crimson that was almost black.

For nearly five minutes he sat in silence. Then the sun slid behind the trees, and for a moment the room seemed to be in darkness.

I began to talk of my own house and my own garden, and he let me do all the talking.

It was twilight when I left him, still sitting in his chair. He was not the kind of man to accompany me to the hall door. All the little conventions and courtesies of social life meant nothing to him. I glanced back as I said "Good night," and saw that he was looking out of the open window. The line of trees stood out against the sky like a great wall split down the middle. The vivid lacquer was only a dark greyness. Jeston himself was almost invisible. His black clothes blended with the darkness. I could not even see his face, and that was how I knew that his black hair was turned towards me, and that he was staring out of the window.

II.

It was Portington who put all sorts of queer ideas into my head about windows. Portington has a very pleasant house at Horton, and he does most of his work



"He seated himself in his black armchair

there—pathetic little songs that sell by tens of thousands, and are, in their way, perfect gems of haunting melody. I have only a cottage, which I use for week-ends, and leave in the charge of an old woman who is a remarkable cleaner, but an abominable cook. On Saturday nights I usually dined with Portington; but he had been in Cornwall for two months, writing a "Sea Cycle," or something of that sort, and he knew nothing of Garling's picture. Then, in the smoking-room after dinner, I told him all about it, and he was immensely interested. He knew Garling, and was quite certain that Garling would never have chosen such a title as "The Window." Of course, Jeston himself had chosen it. Very likely Garling knew nothing about it. A man can go



and explained something of the process."

to a maker of picture frames and order a gilt slip with any inscription that he fancies.

"But would Jeston do anything so ridiculous?" I asked.

Well, yes, Portington thought that Jeston might do a thing like that. And he did not agree with me that the name of the picture was ridiculous. There was something rather subtle about it – something that appealed to him. After all, the window was the most important part of a room. One could do without a fireplace in these days of electric radiators. One could even do without a door, so long as the window was large enough to enter by. Furniture was just a matter of taste. But one could not exist in a room without a window. Had

I ever pictured such a room to myself? It would be a living tomb.

"Light and air," he said, "light and air—that is what a window stands for. And an outlook on the world. Why, life itself is a sort of room. One cannot exist in it without a window, through which one can look on the things that are not of this world. No doubt, to Jeston, his window means the glimpse of an English garden—the cool green, the sweetness of it. After the red lacquer of the East there must be something very fresh and beautiful about the lawn and the trees."

"But when it grows dark?" I said, with a smile.

"Ah, when it grows dark!" Portington echoed. "Then it's the other way round, I fancy. There is warmth and light in the room—a feeling of security—and outside—just the blackness. Then the room must seem like life, and one would look through the window at death—waiting outside there in the darkness."

"And draw the blinds," I said, "and shut out the darkness? Have you ever noticed, Portington, how fond people are of shutting out the darkness, or the fog, or the rain? They like to forget that there are such things. They draw the blinds and curtains, and sit by the fire. Well, we are talking a good deal of nonsense, are we not? Metaphor—allegory—fable—that kind of thing would not appeal to Jeston."

Portington leant forward and knocked out the ashes of his pipe into the fireless grate.

"I'll tell you something about that window," he said, after a pause. "I am afraid of it."

"Afraid of it?" I queried.

"Yes—after dark," he replied. "I don't think it's that particular window, but all windows built in that particular way. You see, in closing that kind of window one has to lean out a little in order to catch hold of the edge of the casement. When it is dark, one does not know what there is outside. A hand might come out of the darkness and catch hold of one's wrist and pull one forward. Then one would stumble over that low sill and go headlong."

I asked him if Jeston had put that absurd idea into his head.

"No," he answered. "But there was a window like that in my father's house, and sometimes I was told to shut it after dark, and I was always afraid as I stretched out my hand into the darkness. I felt that some day, sooner or later, I should feel the grip of a hand upon my wrist. Of course, nothing ever did happen."

"You are no longer a silly boy," I said sharply.

No, he admitted, that was true, but fears of that sort survive.

For a minute we smoked our pipes in silence. Then Portington said abruptly: "Shall we just stroll across and see Jeston? I'd like to have a look at that picture. You have aroused my curiosity."

"Jeston will not satisfy it," I replied. "He will only tell you that the title was Garling's idea."

Portington said that he would ask Garling about that.

"Is it really of any importance?" I said. "I mean, it is no business of ours."

Portington agreed with me, but he added that he liked Jeston. I did not quite see what this had to do with the matter.

"One would like to know more of Jeston," he explained. "I am sure there is something tremendous about him—I've always felt that—and yet, so far as I know, he has never done anything great. He gives one the impression of a man who is waiting his opportunity. One is inclined to admire Jeston—I don't know why. Perhaps it is because one really knows so little about him. Well, I'm going round to see this picture."

He rose from his chair and looked at me inquiringly.

"I am your guest," I said, "and I think I'll go home. I don't feel in the mood for Jeston to-night."

"Oh, well, if you put it like that," he said peevishly, "of course I can't leave you."

"On the contrary, Portington," I replied, "I was just going in any case. I have some work to do to-night—something I couldn't finish at the office."

Portington walked with me as far as the gate of my cottage garden.

"You think me abominably rude," he said, as we shook hands.

"Oh, we know each other too well for that," I replied. "Take care of the barbed wire on Jeston's gate."

"I don't often behave like this," he continued, "but I feel that I must see Jeston to-night. Don't know if you ever feel like that about anybody?"

"Yes," I answered. "I felt like that about you, Portington, directly you came back from Cornwall."

"Oh, you make me feel a brute!" he muttered, and he went striding down the road. It was a very dark night, and I could

not see him, but I could hear that he was walking quickly. I entered my cottage, spread out my plans and papers on the table in my sitting-room, lit my pipe, and thrust both Portington and Jeston out of my thoughts. My work was of the sort that required absolute concentration of mind.

Two hours later—the clock had just struck twelve—there was a loud knocking on the front door. I opened it and saw Portington. The light of the lamp I carried in my hand showed his lean, tall figure against a background of sparkling rain. He was very wet, and his short golden-brown beard glistened with moisture.

"Hello!" I said. "I didn't know it was raining."

"Yes—started half an hour ago," he replied. "Look here, you've got to come along with me at once. Put on a mackintosh."

"What's wrong? Jeston?"

"Yes. I don't know—I'll tell you all about it as we go along. I've torn my coat on that cursed barbed wire, and I've hurt my hand."

"But look here, Portington, you're soaked!"

"No overcoat," he muttered; "never thought it would rain. Look sharp, and bring a lantern." I pulled him into the house, shut the door, gave him a wineglassful of neat whisky, lit the lantern, and put on my mackintosh.

"You'd better have an overcoat," I said; "I've two or three."

He mumbled something about shutting the stable door after the horse was stolen, but I made him put on a coat, and bandaged his cut finger with a strip of linen. He drank the whisky, and we set out along the road that led to Jeston's house.

Then he told me what had happened, speaking in jagged, short sentences, breathing heavily as we hurried along through the darkness. He had found Jeston sitting in the smoking-room, and Jeston had not been very glad to see him. The window was closed, but the curtains and chintz were not drawn. The room smelt abominably of varnish. They had talked of the picture, about the name on the gilt slip, and Jeston had insisted that he was not responsible for the whims of an artist. Then they had talked about Portington's visit to Cornwall, and then—it was just about quarter past eleven—Jeston had opened the window and returned to his seat.

"It was raining," said Portington, "and I saw the rain glittering in the light from the lamp. And suddenly Jeston rose again from his chair and put out the lamp, and we were in darkness."

Then it appears that Portington had asked for some explanation of this curious behaviour, and Jeston had replied: "You had better go home." And there had been a long silence, only broken by the pattering of the rain on the window. And then Jeston had said: "I never asked you to come here." That was all. And there was another long silence, and Portington could see nothing but the faint glow of Jeston's pipe. Portington laid great stress on the fact that he could see nothing. "How was I likely to see anything," he insisted, "in that darkness?"

"But you heard something?" I queried.

"I heard nothing," he replied, "but I was getting a bit scared. I hate sitting in the dark. I hate the very idea of darkness. I always sleep with a light in my room. I began to talk to Jeston, but he told me to hold my tongue. So I just gripped the arms of my chair with my hands, and listened, and I heard nothing."

We had reached the gate of Jeston's garden, and I paused with my hand on the top rail—between two ugly little spears of the barbed wire.

"It is not far to the house," I said. "I'd better know everything before we go inside."

"Well, at last I heard something," said Portington.

"Footsteps?" I queried.

"No, I heard the door softly open and shut. I thought someone had entered the room. I whispered: 'Jeston, who is it?' But there was no reply. I repeated my question. Then I struck a match, and I saw that Jeston's chair was empty. No one had entered the room, but Jeston had left it.

"It sounds like a nightmare," I said. "What did you do?"

Well, it appears that Portington had gone into the dining-room, and there he had found Jeston—in his overcoat and hat—and Jeston had shouted: "It's time you left, Portington! I never asked you to come here!" And then Jeston had rushed past him into the hall, opened the door, and vanished.

"I didn't care to look for him by myself," said Portington. "I came straight round to you."

"And now?" I queried.

"I believe Jeston has gone mad," he replied. "We must look for him. I couldn't touch the job alone."

"I doubt if he will be pleased to see us," I said. "However——" I pushed open the gate and, when Portington had passed through, closed it quietly behind us. We walked up the drive under the dripping trees, and found the hall door open. We entered the house and made our way straight to the smoking-room. The lamp was burning, but there was no one in the room. I noticed a curious smell. The centre light of the window was wide open, and the curtains were drawn back. There was no sound but that ceaseless pattering of the rain and the pit-pit-pit of a big moth blundering across the ceiling.

"We shall look pretty fools if Jeston finds us here," I said, "breaking into his house as if we were police after a criminal."

Portington said that there had been something odd about Jeston—that it was our duty, as Jeston's friends, to look after him.

"Because he turned the light out, eh?" I queried sharply.

No, it was not exactly that, Portington explained. It was the creeping out of the room, and then that little scene in the dining-room. No one could deny that Jeston had behaved very oddly.

I strolled across the room to the window, and in the dim light—the lamp threw my shadow before me—I saw what looked like two large yellow leaves upon the lacquered sill. I bent down and touched one of them. Then I started sharply back against the table behind me, and overturned a big Nankin vase. There was a crash and the trickling splash of water running from the table to the floor.

"Bring some light here," I said to Portington. He came forward with the lamp, and we saw brown hands gripping the sill. I took the lamp from Portington and thrust it out of the window. A man was lying there on the flower bed. His head had fallen between his arms, but he had not relaxed his hold. He was a small man, with the clothes of a tramp. We could not see his face, only the pale yellow of his neck and hands, and his black hair. Something glittered among the geraniums. I set down the lamp on the table, stepped out into the rain, and picked up a long, thin knife with a slight curve in the blade. Then I looked at Portington. He was leaning forward over the table and trying to say something. But no sound came from his lips. He had the artistic temperament, you know, and a good deal of imagination. I caught hold of the man under the armpits and wrenched him away from the window. He was quite dead. His hands were red as if stained with blood. It was not until I glanced at the lacquer sill that I realised that there had been no bloodshed.

"A Chinaman," said Portington.

"Yes," I replied. "Yes, of course." And then, after a pause: "The police, Portington, and a doctor. You'd better go."

He gave me a look of gratitude and slipped out of the room. I don't think he could have stood another minute of it. I laid the man down on the crushed geraniums, face upwards, his red hands among the red flowers. Then I looked at the knife again. It was clean and bright, without a stain. No doubt Jeston was alive—hiding, perhaps, in the darkness of the garden. And yet it was not like Jeston to hide from any danger. I laid the knife on the table, close to the broken vase. Then I stepped back into the room again, seated myself on the black lacquer chair, and waited, staring out into the darkness.

Jeston must often have sat like that, I thought, waiting—waiting—waiting. But for what?

* * * * *

No doubt, if Jeston had been at the inquest, he could have explained everything. But half an hour after the arrival of the police at Jeston's house there was a violent thunderstorm, and while we were searching the gardens, I saw Jeston, quite plainly, standing outside the window of the smoking-room—a black figure against the light of the lamp. A policeman came running past me with a lantern. Before he could reach the window, however, a jagged line of light came down from the sky, and there was a tremendous crash of thunder, like the fall of a thousand gigantic sheets of metal. I saw Jeston falling, and then the quick spit of blue flames along the framework of the window—the whole window showed out just as if it had been coated with luminous paint. Then there were yellow flames—little leaping tongues—and smoke against the light of the lamp in the room. The fire was got under in a few minutes, but all the woodwork was scorched and blackened. Jeston was dead. He had fallen almost on the very place where I had found the body of the Chinaman. He hardly seemed to have been hurt at all, and there was a smile on his lips.

And so the inquest on the Chinaman was more or less a blundering in the dark. The coroner could make nothing of Portington's evidence, and when I began to talk about

the picture, I was told to answer the questions put to me. The jury were all sensible, commonplace men, and I do not think they were willing to admit for a moment that either Portington or myself threw any light on the matter. Inquests are carried out on very discreet and conservative lines. Imagination, unfortunately, is allowed to play very little part in them. I do not like to use the word "unfortunately," but knowing as I do that in one case, at any rate, a murderer has gone scot free because of the lack of imagination on the part of the authorities, I do not use it without reason.

The doctors' evidence was quite simple and, from the unimaginative point of view, quite satisfactory. The deceased had a serious form of heart disease, and he had, presumably, come to Horton either to steal something from Jeston's house or to kill Jeston. No doubt the excitement—I suppose that theft or murder are exciting even to the calm mind of the criminal—proved too much for him. Nothing was known of the man, and Jeston's papers, thoroughly examined, threw no light on his identity. The general idea was that he was a thief, and that his weapon was only for self-defence. In the minds of the jury and the coroner—a very stolid fellow—there was no mystery at all. And with the verdict there was, so far as the public was concerned, an end of the matter. Certainly Jeston's cousin, who inherited all his property, was quite satisfied.

Directly after the funeral Portington returned to Cornwall, and I did not see him for a month. Then one Saturday night we dined together again at Portington's house, and I saw the picture hanging over Portington's sideboard.

"I bought it from his cousin," he said. "Garling would be angry if he knew how little I gave for it. But the cousin did not like the thing, and I—I very much admired Jeston."

"So did I," I replied; "but—— Well, the law cannot touch a man who is dead, and it was in self-defence."

"Ah, you think that, do you?" he queried. "Yes—perhaps. I never did understand Jeston. By the by, I met Garling as I passed through town, and Garling told me that he had never given the picture a name."

"'The Window,'" I said, after a pause. "An open window—on the ground floor—the obvious entrance to a house at night. A trap—a death-trap."

Portington stared across the table at me with a puzzled look in his eyes.

"Poison," I continued. "Something in the varnish. The last coat was not lacquer at all, just some kind of poison dissolved in spirit. He had given it a fresh coat that night. You saw how the spirit flared up when the lightning struck it. No evidence left, of course. I think Jeston went down to the river to fling away anything that might have given a clue. And the window frame itself—only the charred surface of the wood left. Of course, the lightning was fortunate for Jeston, in more ways than one. I do not think he wished to live; he only wanted to be sure that the other man was dead. You saw, I suppose, that the Chinaman's right hand was scratched. Well, I'll tell you where he got those scratches. As you know, there is barbed wire all round the garden—hundreds of yards of it—and the gates are laced with it. In the dark it would hardly be possible to avoid scratching oneself."

"For a man of business," said Portington, "you have a very vivid imagination."

"That window," I continued, "was to Jeston the central feature of his life. All the other windows in the house were shut after dark, summer and winter. That was the one obvious entrance—a trap. The Chinaman came to kill Jeston; I don't think Jeston worried about that. He only wanted the man to die, and, above all, he did not want the world to know that he (Jeston) had killed him. I think Jeston must have known the approximate date of the man's coming, but I am not sure of that. Anyway, Jeston was waiting for him. He gave me that impression—of a man who was waiting for something—always."

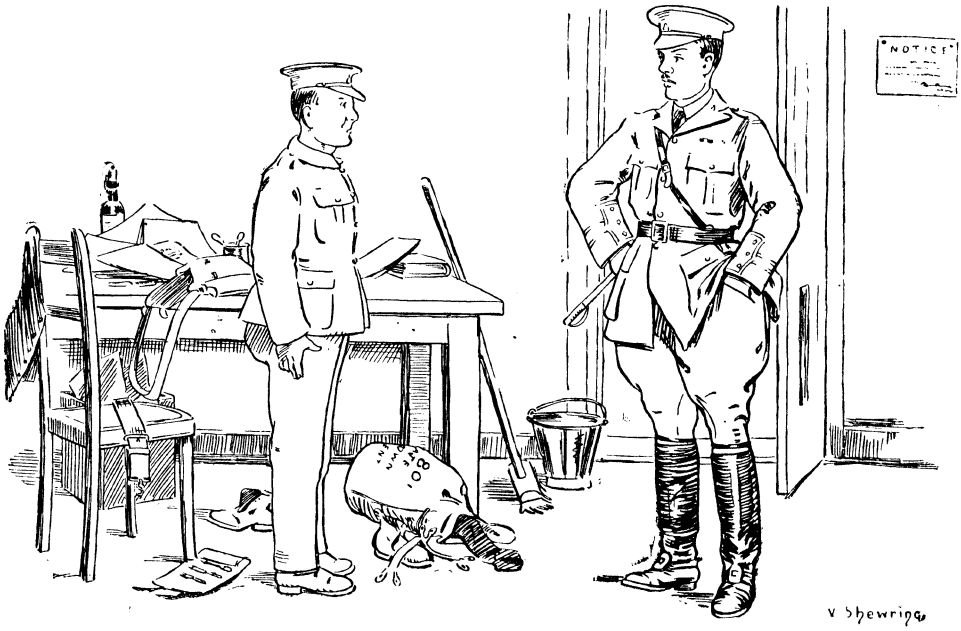
Portington began to argue against my theory. There was the question of motive.

"We shall never know Jeston's story," I interrupted, "but I'll tell you this. Jeston once showed me the photograph of a Chinese woman. It was not found among Jeston's papers. Another man's wife, perhaps. A daughter, possibly. There are, of course, certain objections to a European marrying a Chinese girl. I do not know the truth of the matter. The two men who do are dead."

We smoked our cigarettes in silence for a minute. Then Portington said: "I wish you hadn't put this idea into my head. Shall we go into the smoking-room?"

I rose from my chair, and, passing the picture on the way to the door, I paused.

"That is the real evidence, Portington," I said. "You must not forget that Jeston himself called it 'The Window.'"



THE UNEXPECTED.

OFFICER: What's the meaning of this untidy place? It's not fit for a pig.
ORDERLY: No, sir; but sergeant said you would not be here till to-morrow.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

HOLIDAYS.

"WHEN I was a young gal," said Mrs. Perkins, "holidays was only just beginning to be thought of. Nobody ever offered to take you to Switzerland, and board and lodge you, and push you up one side of a mountain and roll you down the other, and bring you back half dead, for ten guineas, like they used to do before the War.

"No, we only had one day a year then, and went to Gravesend by the steamboat, all happy and comfortable, eating shrimps and having our portraits cut out in black paper and stuck on a card, all done by a real artist with long hair, for sixpence. And now there's millions of people, from the highest to the lowest, who believe they'd go into a decline if they didn't have a fortnight off every summer regular. I don't blame them—I ain't the one to begrudge anyone a little harmless enjoyment—but if it means living on fried fish and chips for three months beforehand, to save up your money, and making your dinner off penny buns and marmalade for six weeks afterwards, to get over spending it, I'd rather put in a day or two at Epping Forest or Greenwich Park. But, of course, you can't send picture-postcards to your friends from them places, and that seems to be half the enjoyment.

"Not that it's much to go by, after all. Most people, when they get a card, are so taken up with the view they forget to look at the post-mark. I don't. That's how I found out that a lady friend of mine who sent me a lovely picture of Torquay by moonlight hadn't got any farther than Southend. It's funny how people who are going off for a holiday expect them that ain't to take care of their things for them, just to save the burglary insurance money. A party I used to oblige when she'd lost her lady-help, which happened about once a month, ses to me one day: 'Oh, Mrs. Perkins, would you like to come and mind our house while we go to the seaside?' 'Certainly, mum,' I ses, 'if the terms suit.' 'Well,' she ses, 'you can have the beans out of the garden; there'll be a nice lot of scarlet runners coming on soon.' I ses: 'As I don't happen to be a vegetarian with private means, I won't take it on.'

"One summer my place was a regular menagerie. Different parties kept bringing me cats and canaries and goldfish to mind, and the man next door took three planks out of his fence and asked me to pop in and out and see to his chickens. I'm too easy-going, I am—the worst of me is, I can't say 'No'—but never again. I don't think I ever had such a



A MERE TRIFLE.

SYMPATHISER (to American airman, whose machine has come down in flames): My word, you had a near escape that time!

AIRMAN: Gee whiz! I guess that's nothing much out, stranger. I used to play the heroic parts for a "movie" firm 'fore the War.



TOO MUCH STARCH.

GYMNASTIC INSTRUCTOR (to awkward recruit): What was yer in civil life, me lad?
RECRUIT: Worked in a laundry.
INSTRUCTOR: Ah, then *that* accounts for yer bein' so bloomin' stiff.

worrying time before, not even when my Albert had water on the brain and aneroids both at the same time.

"It wasn't my fault that the cats got too fond of the canaries, and I couldn't help it if the goldfish did go off their feed and commit suicide by jumping out of the aquarium on to some very nasty things when he couldn't find the bodies.

"Of course, I ought to have buried the bones and feathers there, but you can't think of everything. Yes, holidays bring their troubles, even to harmless persons like myself who stay at home."

H. Roberts.



THE EXPLANATION.

VISITOR: These sketches are awfully good, but why do you draw such ugly women? Tell me, where do you get your subjects from?

PATIENT: Oh, mostly from the visitors.

the hearthrug. Then two of the chickens died mysteriously. I broke the news to the party next door, when he came home, and showed him the two nice little graves I'd made under the elderberry, and that ought to have satisfied him, if he'd been a gentleman. But he's a nosy individual, and he insisted on digging them up to see what they'd died of, and said

LANDLADY: No, indeed! There is nothing wrong with my cooking, but that sort *won't* cook.

LODGER: What is wrong with them?

LANDLADY (pityingly): Well, miss, some people think they are split peas, but *I* know the difference directly I see them. Those aren't split peas at all—they're *cereals.*

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—*Old saying.*



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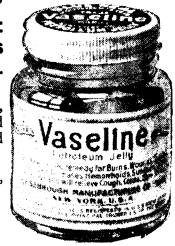




THE WORD "Vaseline"

although unknown 50 years ago, is one of the most popular throughout the whole world to-day, but at the same time there are still a great many people who have yet to learn that the word is a registered trade-mark and the exclusive property of the Chesebrough Manufacturing Co., of New York, London, Moscow, Montreal, etc.

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"SPEED THE PLOUGH!" BY LUCIEN DAVIS.



THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

ITS ORGANISATION AND WORK

JUDGED from one standpoint, the history of British Government is the development of the functions of the executive from a single unit into a complex organisation. It is like the growth of animal life from the original single cell. Each new necessity in the national life brings with it a new subdivision of the central power, just as the primitive tribe or community develops into the vast complexity we call the modern State. In the beginning is the king; he is in his own person the sole executive; he leads the tribe in war and administers justice according to custom. But the political unit soon grows too big and too old for one man to handle in person. Custom, particularly as it grows into law, becomes the study of a lifetime. So we get the Chancellor. Finance becomes bigger and more intricate, and we get the Lord Treasurer. Then the mere routine of sending letters and of general administration becomes excessive, and the Secretary of State appears. Then the work gets too big for one secretary; it is subdivided. And so it goes on indefinitely, until Prime Ministers and public alike groan over the automatic increases in the Cabinet.

Some regard this multiplication of offices as an invention of the politicians or the Evil One. But to a great extent it does not spring from a deliberate policy at all, but from a special need or circumstance which must be met. A nation whose executive was static would have ceased to develop, and therefore be about to decline.

The War, of course, intensified this process with startling rapidity. An individualistic nation had suddenly to be turned into a war machine. Cases where Government action was imperative sprang up all round. To meet the new needs, the Executive once more subdivided itself, and among the most prominent results were the Ministries of Munitions, of Food, and of Information. All these sprang from one single root cause—

the national demand for the supply of an article which could only be provided by the Government. No one invented the need for shells, the necessity for food control, or the importance of propaganda. They were forced by the imperative logic of events on a somewhat reluctant Cabinet.

We did not take naturally to the task of propaganda abroad. There is something innate in the British character, whether you call it modesty, or shyness, or pride, which makes us peculiarly reluctant to explain our virtues to other nations. The French used to call this quality the *morgue britannique*, and exemplify it by pointing to the reserve or arrogance of the British visitor or tourist abroad. Self-sufficiency is, perhaps, the best term. Conscious that we intended no wrong to other people, and firmly convinced that we could look after ourselves in any scrap, we thought that people ought to take us at our own valuation, and that if they did not —well, it didn't much matter. And so the whole idea of an official propaganda was unfamiliar to us. Britain was an un-propagandist nation in the same sense that it was an unmilitary one. The stuff was there all right, but it lacked the need of exercise.

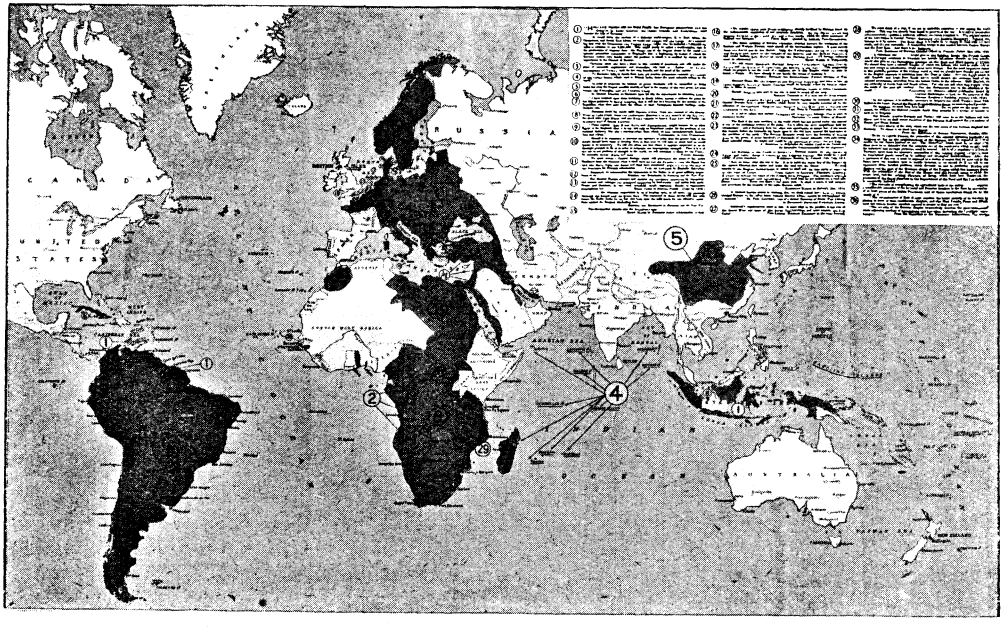
Three different and unrelated organisations were set up under Mr. Asquith's War Government. Wellington House took charge of semi-official publication abroad; there was a Political Intelligence Department to supply the Ministry with news of opinion in the world, and there was a small section which dealt with cables, wireless messages, and articles to be dispatched abroad.

All these offices did their best; their trouble was that they were unrelated, that they were not in close touch with the Government, that in one sense they did what they liked, and yet that in another they had no real power. The whole thing was amateurish simply because the nation did not take propaganda seriously.

It was the gradual realisation of the German method which stirred us all out of somnolence into an effort which first equalled and finally beat Germany at its own game. The German Secret Service propaganda machine had been at work long before the War. Where England had spent thousands Germany had spent millions, clumsily, perhaps, but in unstinted profusion. The most ordinary private individual was in his way a German agent. All that the War did was to stimulate this octopus to a real frenzy of activity. Its

WHAT GERMANY WANTS

HER CLAIMS AS SET FORTH BY LEADERS OF GERMAN THOUGHT



A POSTER WHICH HAS BEEN CIRCULATED IN ALMOST EVERY LANGUAGE, AND WHICH ILLUSTRATES, BY CHAPTER AND VERSE, THE "WORLD-POWER" CLAIMS MADE BY GERMAN STATESMEN AND PUBLICISTS.

tentacles stretched out in every direction and reached for everything they could. Business, newspapers, banks, private conversations, sabotage plots, dynamite outrages, all became vehicles for a creed which preached less that Germany was justified in the War than that she was going to conquer. *Væ victis!* Woe to the neutral, in the hour of Germany's triumph, who had had doubts as to the justice of her cause.

Suddenly Great Britain began to realise that "opinion" was no longer a vague abstraction, fluttering in the air its beautiful



THE BRITISH AT WAR: THIS VERY EFFECTIVE POSTER, GIVING SOME INTERESTING STATISTICS AS TO WHAT GREAT BRITAIN HAS DONE IN THE WAR, AND SHOWING WHERE BRITISH TROOPS ARE ENGAGED, HAS BEEN CIRCULATED ALL OVER THE WORLD. THIS IS THE SPANISH EDITION.

wings in vain, but a real effective instrument of modern war. The professional armies, impervious to general opinion, no longer dominated the scene and dictated peace and victory irrespective of the views of the civilian population. National *morale* had become the decisive factor, and *morale* depended on opinion, and opinion to some extent on propaganda.

It was the march of science and education across the globe which had produced this profound change from the wars of the eighteenth century. Education had given the masses the power to read, and democracy the power to act on their reading. The battle of Tannenberg or the battle of the Marne became vivid to millions of readers from Buenos Aires to Tokio, and the results of their opinion powerfully affected the prospects of the Allies in the most practical and intimate way. Food, shipping, shells, and finally armies could be supplied by the world outside. The solidarity of the Allies themselves depended on a mutuality of understanding. Were all these things to go by default because we would not explain the justice of our cause, the greatness of our effort, and ultimate certainty of triumph, to the jury of the world? Was the *morque britannique* to prove an insuperable obstacle?

Mr. Lloyd George's Government thought not. It sent for Mr. Buchan from France, and organised the existing propaganda sections into the Department of Information in February, 1917. The Department, like its predecessors, struggled nobly with adversity, but it did not possess sufficient power to make its views prevail. Its connection with the War Cabinet was fleeting and uncertain, and, though much good work was done, much remained to do. Every new

Government Department has, even under the most ordinary circumstances, to fight against its older brethren for the charter of existence. And these circumstances were by no means ordinary.

By 1918 it became clear that a further effort must be made to establish our propaganda on a sound basis. The Prime Minister decided to create a Ministry of Information, to give it extended powers and functions, and its head the status of a Cabinet Minister. On March 4 the new Ministry was officially constituted, and Lord Beaverbrook became its chief.

The appointment was much commented on, both favourably and adversely, and most



Photo by] [*The Daily Mirror.*

A TYPICAL CROWD OUTSIDE THE GRAFTON GALLERIES DURING THE RUN OF THE WAR PHOTOGRAPHS EXHIBITION.

of the praise and the blame was equally irrelevant. The new Minister owed his selection to one simple fact. As the head of the Canadian Records and a Chairman of the War Office Cinematograph Committee, he had scored a startling success and led the British world in the race for publicity. On previous form no one had a reputation which could compete with his when it came to choosing a man to control our war propaganda. He had been the first man to grasp what publicity meant in modern war, and his prescience secured his promotion.

The province of the Ministry is all propaganda overseas. Its duty is to state the British case and explain the British war effort. Propaganda in the United Kingdom remains with the independent War Aims Committee, while propaganda in Austria, Bulgaria, and Germany belongs to a separate organisation under Lord Northcliffe. To this arrangement there is one exception. The necessity of a single control for all official photographs and cinematographs led to their entire centralisation in the hands of the Ministry, and for these branches of activity the province is the world.

That statesman is not to be envied who has to assist at the birth of a new Ministry. The new man going to the old Department of State finds it already encrusted with tradition, manned with a staff long expert in their duties, and with its rights and province of operation carefully defined by use or statute.

Very different is the position of the brand-new Minister. All the precedents have to be created, and the area of his work is completely undefined. Here he sets sail into an unknown sea, unexplored and uncharted, with no light to guide him between rock and shoal and bar.

Propaganda itself, as undertaken by a Government in war-time, is a new art. Yet so vague is the term itself, and so varied must be an attempt to state to the world the whole of the British case, that it infringes on ground jealously guarded by older Departments as part of their hallowed preserves. And no individual on earth is so jealous of

his prescriptive right as is a Government office. In policy the new Ministry has to deal with the Foreign Office, in intelligence work with the War Office and the Admiralty and with the Foreign Office again.

Then comes the question of staff. It is true that the Ministry of Information had the nucleus of a staff in the Departments it took over; but since the whole object of the Ministry was increased activity and added functions, this had to be enlarged.

How was this to be done? In the fourth year of the War, and after repeated combings out in Whitehall, available trained Civil servants were not so much at famine price as non-existent. Not only was it impossible to beg or borrow them from the hardly-pressed established Ministries—it was also impossible to steal them! For there is a standing rule of the Civil Service that a man may not be transferred to another Government office without the consent of his original chief.

If there are no Civil servants available, who ought to be employed on a job like official propaganda? Well, of course, there are the journalists, whose profession is a kind of unofficial propaganda; but even the number of journalists available was distinctly limited. Moreover, a considerable part of the work of the Ministry consists of administration pure and simple. To meet the difficulty, the new Minister had recourse to men of experience in the organising side of business. An excellent knowledge of foreign countries can obviously be discovered in this sphere of life. The proportion of business men is about one in five of the heads of departments and sections. A certain number of officers of the Army were also added for the discharge of executive duties. It was in this manner that the problem of *personnel* was solved. Galvanised by the example of the Minister, this staff sprang into a zeal for accomplishment rather than for formal routine, and in the space of a few months placed the relative positions of German and English in the reverse order to that which they had occupied since the beginning of the propaganda war.

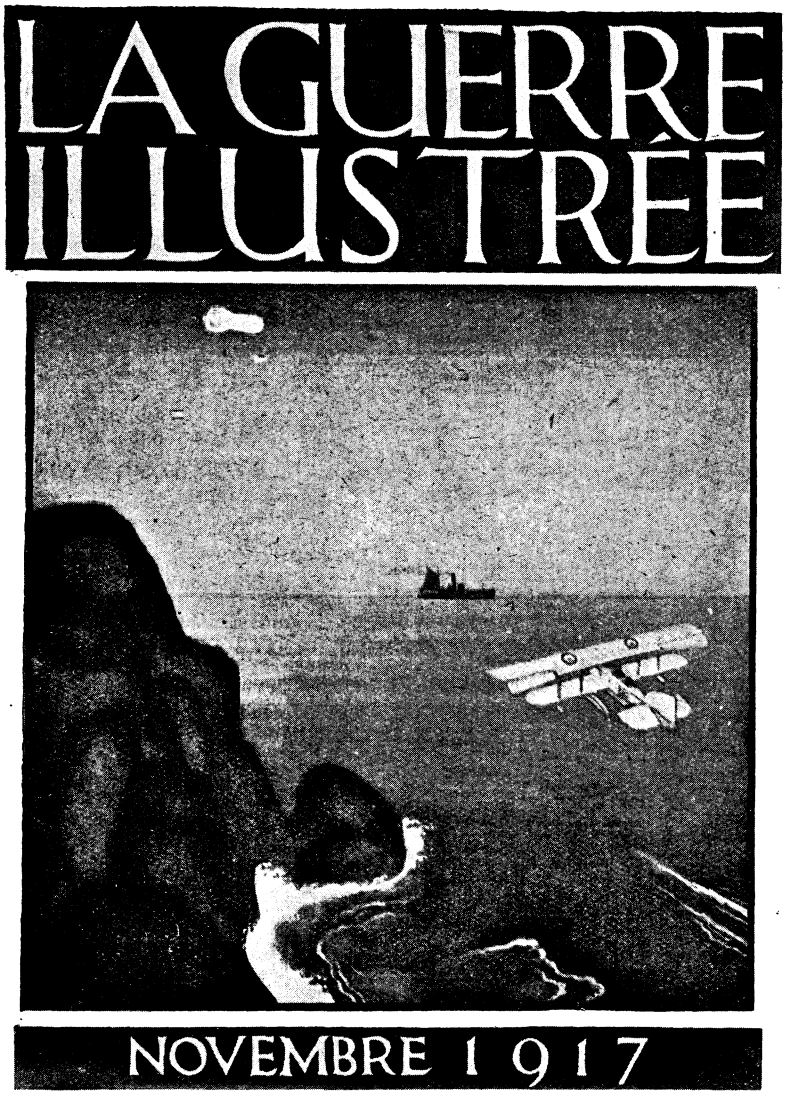
The complexities of such an organisation are innumerable. Briefly, however, it may



AMIENS. BY MUIRHEAD BONE.

Many artists are working for the Ministry of Information, among them being Mr. Muirhead Bone, Mr. McBey, Sir William Orpen, and Mr. Paul Nash. Mr. Muirhead Bone was the first of the official War artists, and from the time he went to France, in 1916, he has made numerous drawings of great interest at the present day, and of outstanding importance in the history of the War. Mr. McBey is working in Palestine, and Sir John Lavery has produced a number of pictures of Home scenes.

be divided under several main heads. There is (1) Propaganda in Europe, the East, and South America, both among neutrals and allies. (2) Propaganda in the British Empire and the United States of America—that is to say, among people speaking our own tongue. (3) There is the special work of the cable and wireless system, and (4) there is what may be called the mechanical instrument of the photograph and the cinematograph. (5) There is the Intelligence Branch, on which policy is based. (6) And, lastly, there are Facilities for the Press and Oversea Visitors. The Ministry is not exactly so subdivided in administration, but these heads will be found convenient for discussion, and will yet tell the Germans nothing of its internal method.



"LA GUERRE ILLUSTRÉE": THE FRENCH EDITION OF AN ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE WHICH IS CIRCULATED IN A DOZEN VARIOUS EDITIONS EVERY MONTH.

This striking cover was specially designed by Mr. Edmund Dulac.

When I said convenient for discussion, I might equally well have said convenient for criticism. For under some of these heads the Ministry has made an improvement in method and practice which amounts to a revolution; under others, all that it can claim is a slight advantage over its predecessors.

As far as non-British countries abroad are concerned, Lord Beaverbrook, as the critics have pointed out, has no special experience. All that he has been able to contribute there is an improvement in the machinery. The British effort had been unco-ordinated, now it is co-ordinated. The greater influence of a Ministry, as opposed to that of a Department, has secured some larger degree of consideration for its agents abroad, but very little. The Foreign Office still stands as a resolute bar against the establishment of a rival organisation in a province it considers peculiarly its own. It will not tolerate the establishment of a popular diplomacy side by side with its own system, even though the popular

method preaches nothing but the same policy.

It was against the expenditure of the original propaganda departments that the Select Committee on Expenditure directed its criticisms. But even in this field one conspicuous achievement stands to the credit of the Ministry. Strangely enough, it is the one point which the critics have elected to assail. It cannot be denied that, before the formation of the Ministry, money spent abroad had been, not so much wasted as poured out without due method, control, or economy. The zealous propagandist is so keen on any new idea that he forgets all questions of relative cost and result. It was to correct this tendency that men of organising business experience relating to special foreign areas were placed as controllers at the head of some of the foreign sections, to supervise, not policy, but method. Yet the very critics who fastened on the Select Committee's report on the looseness of financial control were the first to protest against the only cure—the introduction into the Ministry of men with administrative experience.



BRITISH WOMEN'S WORK IN THE WAR: THE DUTCH EDITION OF A PICTORIAL BOOKLET WHICH HAS BEEN VERY POPULAR.

Lord Beaverbrook has summarised the argument for business men in a recent letter to *The Morning Post*—

"The real problem is control and allocation of expenditure. Nearly all money spent on propaganda does some good. But money is strictly limited. One must spend it, therefore, on those methods which do most good. It is the task of the Controller to make the choice between the various schemes submitted to him, and to see that the method of applying it is not wasteful. For this duty a man who has spent his life organising a big business in a special area is eminently suited. It is exactly the kind of problem he has to solve every day, and on the correct solution his success largely depends. To-day I am compelled to defend the business men

who control expenditure. If I were deprived of their services, I should be indicted to-morrow for 'allowing writers with no experience of business to handle large sums of public money.' I prefer to keep a just proportion in the Ministry, and to ask each of my officials to do the kind of work he understands."

If the duty of the Controller or Director of Sections abroad is mainly method, the function of the Intelligence Branch is policy. That Department receives and digests all the information which is necessary to inspire a suitable propaganda policy in the different countries. It is, in fact, the adviser of the Minister on what may be called the higher strategy of propaganda, and is concerned to watch that this strategy is carried out in the tactical proceedings of all the branches of the Ministry.

There is no reason to hesitate in giving praise where praise is due. The development of the wireless and cable services



CHINESE CALENDAR IN STRIKING COLOURS, ISSUED AS A PRESENT FROM H.M. GOVERNMENT TO THE MEN OF THE CHINESE LABOUR CORPS IN FRANCE: THE CALENDAR INDICATES THE DATES ACCORDING TO BOTH THE CHINESE AND BRITISH RECKONING.



THIS UNION JACK POSTCARD, PRINTED IN HINDI, URDU, BENGALI, GURUMUKHI, MARATHI, TAMIL, BURMESE, ARABIC, CHINESE, MALAY, AND OTHER LANGUAGES, BEARS A PATRIOTIC VERSE, THE ENGLISH OF WHICH READS:

Symbol of Freedom, Truth, and Right,
Proud 'neath thy folds our soldiers fight.
Each with his life thy Cause defends,
And Heaven to each its blessing sends.

under the Ministry certainly falls under the head of praise. Here a new impulse has been given to the original organisation for stating our case and our news to all allied and neutral countries. We hear much of the German wireless, but very little of our own. Yet every day there goes by wireless from the Ministry of Information what is practically a small daily paper translated into several languages and published all over the world. To this the War Office, the Admiralty, and the Air Ministry are the principal contributors. But the Foreign Office or some other Department often has a fact to supply which it is important to convey to some special country abroad. For our distant armies in Mesopotamia or East Africa the official wireless is the newspaper; and, indeed, at Salonika it is published every day by the Staff under the title of *The Balkan News*. When one considers how recent an event wireless is in



Photo by] [*Swaine.*

THE RIGHT HON. LORD BEAVERBROOK, P.C., MINISTER OF INFORMATION.

the history of civilisation, it is curious to picture the soldier thousands of miles away turning at early breakfast to his daily wireless for his red-hot news as he might to a morning paper at home.

The most careful and critical inquiry would elicit the fact that a tremendous stride forward has been made by the Ministry in the conduct of the wireless campaign. The number of words issued a day has been doubled or trebled. Communication has been established by the courtesy of the United States Government with all the principal American Press agencies, so that the British news goes straight into the columns of the American Press. The importance of this extension can hardly be realised. It means that the British wireless is placed before the largest and most intelligent newspaper reading public in the world, and a public on whom much depends, both in the waging of war and the making of peace. The Ministry has established the inter-allied wireless service sent from the French Government stations, so that the Allied Governments in Europe now speak with a single voice. One of the functions of the English and French stations is to track down and refute the lies issued from Nauen, whence goes the German wireless.

The point to remember is this. A lie is

dangerous unless it is contradicted immediately. The final proof that it is a lie will only come in weeks or months afterwards, and by that time a great deal of the damage will have been done. It is the function of the British wireless to nail the lie to the counter at once, and prevent the damage intended spreading into all kind of subsidiary results long before the untruth is formally proved by the course of events. It is difficult to imagine a more important function in these days of modern war, when public opinion is the leading factor in the death-grapple between the world and Potsdam.

What is true of wireless is also true of the system of cabled news. A distinct advance has been made both in the quality and the quantity of the matter telegraphed. The British wireless is, of course, official. On the other hand, much of the cabled information goes in the form of ordinary news telegrams, and it would accordingly be against the national interest to discuss its operations in any detail. It may be said, however, that there is no country so remote or even so apparently insignificant that the service does not reach it, and that a great extension of this form of activity has taken place since the Ministry was constituted.

What are the ethics and the method of propaganda by cable? The essence of the contract is to tell the truth. In the long run false news does not even pay its producers. One lie is found out, and discredits the whole news service. Even an exaggeration of good news, or a suppression or toning down of bad news, reacts harmfully in the long run. This seems a very simple rule. But the practical method of applying it is not so simple. It is necessary to pick out the special kind of news which interests a particular country, and then to supply it in the form which the local reader likes, otherwise his newspapers will not publish the items.

But the main aim and result of the whole system is to keep up a perpetual flow of news, unvarying in its tone and temper, from day to day and week to week, and designed to show forth both to Allies and to neutrals the achievements of the British arms and the steadfastness of the British people. Against the wall of this constant news supply German lies and German menaces in the neutral world beat in vain.

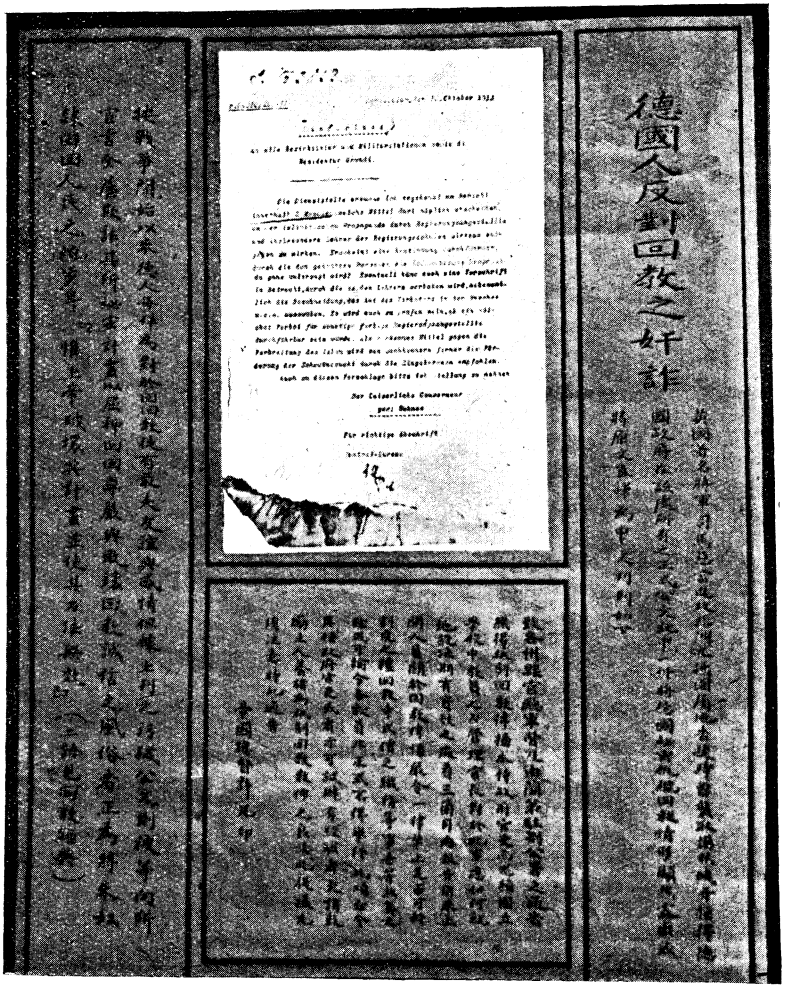
But while, on the one hand, the Ministry sends its news and comment by wireless cable, or books and articles, directly abroad, it also invites friendly foreign observers to come and see our War effort for themselves, and draw their own conclusions. The "Facilities" Branch of the Ministry is, therefore, by no means the least important, and is organised on a far more comprehensive plan than the previous spasmodic efforts of various bodies to entertain distinguished foreigners. These may be divided into the permanent representatives of the foreign press and temporary visitors or others coming on short tours from abroad. For the first class the Ministry has established the Overseas Press Centre, both as a social meeting-place and a convenient place for the semi-official talks to that press, for with the home press the Ministry has no concern.

The influence of these overseas journalists is immense. Hardly known to the best informed among us even by name, for such is the etiquette of their profession, they watch our national life with the utmost intentness, and on what they think and say, much depends. It is the duty and pleasure of the Ministry of Information to put itself at their disposal, as a department largely consisting of journalists easily can when it has to deal with members of its own profession, whose ideas and mode of thought it readily understands. The policy of the Ministry is to give the representatives of the foreign press free access everywhere, except where military secrecy forbids. We have nothing to conceal in our policy, in our efforts or hardships, one might almost say even in our shortcomings.

In return, the Ministry of Information considers itself at once the servant of the overseas press, and its ambassador in dealing with other Departments of State or institutions of all characters. Do the correspondents of the overseas papers desire to see a certain thing usually withheld from the public gaze, then it is to the Ministry that they apply. Whether it is a visit to the Fleet or a visit to the Front, a tour of munition factories, an inspection of our shipyards or our hospitals, it is the Facilities Department of the Ministry which asks the Government Department concerned, obtains the authority, and makes the arrangements for the trip. In such cases figures mean little. It is sufficient to say that Facilities are kept working to their full pitch by the daily necessity of supplying the demands made upon them. One of the features which the overseas press most appreciates is the weekly lecture given at the Ministry by the Director of Military Operations or his substitute.

Here the views of the Higher Command at home on the current developments of the military situation are told quite frankly to the overseas press. Much is trusted to their honour and discretion in the well-justified belief that this confidence will not be abused. At the same time much information of a valuable character is given, exhibiting to the journalist and, through him, to his vast public the situation as it appears to the expert mind. Such expositions help to "stabilise" public opinion abroad, and to prevent it rushing from the extremes of optimism to those of depression on insufficient evidence and events whose effects are passing.

The greatest improvement made by the new *régime* is to be found, perhaps, in the work done among our American Allies and in the Overseas Dominions of the Crown. A large and active branch of the Ministry has been established in New York, and operates in close accord with Lord Reading in the task of putting British views and British performances before the vast public of the United States. The American mission which visited this country recently was conducted by the Ministry with conspicuous success, and the task of providing all kinds of entertainment, such as cinematograph shows and boxing contests, for American troops stationed here has been undertaken with dispatch and efficiency. This last work is of first-rate importance. It makes our American fellow-soldiers feel that their efforts are appreciated, and that they are welcome guests and not strangers in a strange land.



PART OF A POSTER REPRODUCING A DOCUMENT ISSUED IN 1913 BY DR. SCHNEE, A GERMAN OFFICIAL, AND CAPTURED BY GENERAL SMUTS IN MOSHI FORT, GERMAN EAST AFRICA. THIS POSTER WAS DESIGNED FOR THE BENEFIT OF CHINESE MOSLEMS, WHO NUMBER 20,000,000.

In this remarkable document the natives are strongly discouraged from accepting Islam. This attitude of the enemy is contrasted with promises made by them to Turks and other Moslems.

One sphere the Minister might claim as his own. In all that appertained to the formation of opinion in the Overseas Dominions of the Crown, Lord Beaverbrook had, ever since 1915, been pre-eminent. He did not need to learn the business—it was innate in him—and what small things temperament lacked had been supplied by experience.

The first step was the formation of a Dominions Department especially designed to deal with our brethren of the British Empire Overseas. One of its immediate fruits was the assembly of delegates from the press of the whole Empire to witness our War effort both in France and Great Britain, and to report to New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and Canada on what they had seen. Nothing was withheld from them, and they returned to their native shores full of enthusiasm for the War effort they are describing to their own countrymen.

In what may be called the "mechanical" side of propaganda little short of a revolution has been accomplished. The old system, under which the work of photography and cinematography was scattered among several bodies and departments, has been abolished root and branch. The taking of official films and photographs, and their production and distribution throughout the world, have now been concentrated in a single hand. An immense increase in productivity and economy has followed immediately on the change, and the expert in this line of propaganda has at last come by his own.

The photograph has proved itself one of the most potent weapons of propaganda and therefore of war. What the mind cannot take in by the reading of descriptions, the eye can assimilate from the actual outline of the scene and the men depicted on the plate. Besides, the great bulk of mankind soon wearies of the printed word. Photography has about it the convincing atmosphere of the naked reality. Man has only got to open his eyes to see it. So is modern science applied to the arts of war as well as of peace.

The Ministry is in charge of the actual taking of all our photographs on every Front, and its staff ranges from Palestine to Flanders. They show the life of the Army from the depôt or training centre, miles behind, to the firing-line itself, and to an actual scene of battle, and range from a camel corps at Jericho to a Tank at Peronne. The originals, of course, belong to the Ministry, and the first thing done, on taking over, was to have a complete duplicate set made of these thousands of priceless negatives. The distribution of photographs for the press is done through the medium of the illustrating agencies. Prints of the photographs are now produced entirely by the Ministry's own organisation at an immense reduction of cost, and their sale is resulting in a rapidly-growing revenue.

Not less important have been the exhibitions of enlarged or coloured photographs held throughout the United Kingdom and in many countries abroad, notably France, Canada, and the United States. The first of these was held immediately after the formation of the Ministry, and many Londoners will remember the magnificent display at the Grafton Galleries on that occasion, and the splendid show of naval photographs exhibited this summer.

Not less marked has been the revolution effected in our propaganda by cinematograph since March this year. Here, again, the centre of administrative agency and the field of operation has been made one under the Ministry.

It was time that this new development in the educational forces of the world was taken in hand. The cinematograph is the most powerful method of appealing to the masses which modern science has produced; it almost rivals the printing press in the effect which it may yet produce on the mentality of mankind. The Ministry has trained it to uses befitting in dignity the power of the educational instrument.

The problem of distribution in foreign countries has been practically solved. Expert agents place our propaganda films. The battle pictures of Great Britain are now shown in every country in the world, and speak to the eye in a language which bridges over all racial and lingual gulfs.

In the United Kingdom the main feature of Ministerial production is the topical budget. This is a short series of official film pictures which can be introduced easily into the programme of the film theatres, is readily acceptable to the various managements, and is, therefore, shown nightly to audiences numbering hundreds of thousands.

But the principal departure of the Ministry has been the production of the story film, with its moving picture of events by sea and land, and with the propaganda moral well to the fore. "Hearts of the World" has been its first effort in this, but it has other ships at sea which will shortly come home to port.

An account has been given, so far as the public interest permits, of the progress made by the Ministry since its foundation in March of this year. It is the story of the birth of a new subdivision of the executive powers of government; of the concentration of a great part of our propaganda activities under a single head; of a tremendous output

of dynamic energy and imagination, resulting, over a part of the field, in a qualified improvement, and over the rest in a brilliant and revolutionary success wherever the course was clear.

Of this success the most signal proof is to be found in the admissions and complaints of a Germany long accustomed to regard the British as far too stupid to compete with them in this particular sphere. Since the formation of the Ministry all this has changed.

An examination of the German press and of Reichstag speeches during the early summer of 1918 will show a large number of these left-handed compliments, of which the following may serve as example :—The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of May 27 devoted an article to the methods of "the propaganda Minister, Lord Beaverbrook," and his widespread telegraphic propaganda, with special reference to his telegraphic schemes in Scandinavia. The *Koelnische Volkszeitung* of June 3 gave a long article emphasising the necessity for the creation of a German telegraphic propaganda system all over the world, and pointing to the success of the British system. The Reichstag Deputy Herr Heckscher, writing in the *Vossische Zeitung* at the beginning of July, 1918, advocated the creation of a Propaganda Ministry in order to counteract British propaganda and the effect of the speeches of enemy statesmen, etc. He says : "The victorious German sword—the victorious English pen—these conditions must no longer continue, unless our people are to be deprived of a great deal of the fruits of their sacrifices, sufferings, and deeds." At the beginning of July the influential Berlin *Tageblatt* devoted an article to emphasising the manner in which the British Propaganda Ministry was influencing public opinion far and wide. The writer concluded : "We, too, must have a Ministry of Propaganda, unless we are to be deprived of the fruits of our sacrifices, sufferings, and achievements."

Neutral opinion takes much the same view of the matter. The *Svensk Tidskrift* of Stockholm, a review with a pro-German bias, says in a leading article : "Regarded as a whole, the Entente propaganda has been directed with far greater intelligence and appreciation of what was suitable than that of Germany." Finally, in August, comes General Von Stein, the German War Minister, announcing to an official interviewer the simple and poignant truth : "The enemy propaganda is better than ours." And Hindenburg himself has testified to the same effect.

The activities of the Ministry have here been thrown into outline. Their very variety may give the impression that they are disconnected : that one individual deals in photographs, another in cables, and a third in private politeness to important strangers—in a word, that each man thinks of his own special audience. Such a criticism has in it an element of truth. The specialist in cinematography or in the spoken word comes forward to perform this national service precisely because he knows the power he exerts on public opinion by handling his own expert instrument. Propaganda has been born by these gradual and specialised steps. But the work of a Ministry gathered under one roof to perform a common function tends to break down the rigidity of these provincial boundaries. Men learn by experience that they must lean on the assistance of each other in producing their total effect.

And it is out of this experience that the principle of propaganda has in practice been discovered. From the point of view of the Minister, the proper study of the propagandist is man. The critic who talks about specialisation has got hold of the wrong end of the stick. He is thinking too much of the propagandist and his organisation, and too little of the man who is to be affected by it. That man gets up and reads his paper, cables, and articles, he talks it over, he collects special bits of information, he reads, perhaps, a book or an article in the evening, he notes the faces all round him. The sum of his opinions is often the total of these varied experiences. And though each of these experiences is affected by the expert, the result is what may be called atmosphere, and it is atmosphere that the propagandist seeks to produce. For this it is essential that he should peer into the recesses which are the subconscious mind of man. How much of the views or temper he will find there are based on particular knowledge based on incontestable evidence ? Very little ; most of them are based on a general tending of evidence and sympathy springing from sources which he could not analyse. It is this general atmosphere that propaganda produces, and the art is not less but more a unity because it is practised by many diverse means. Man must be examined in every country, and every angle and propaganda adjusted to fit every projection of his mind.

THE ISLE OF INCENTIVE

By RALPH STOCK

Illustrated by Steven Spurrier

AT ten p.m. the lights were extinguished, and the "glory hole" went stumbling and grumbling to bed.

The gramophone continued to bray into the darkness until the needle rasped its way into virgin celluloid and came to a shrieking full-stop. The "crown and anchor" *soirée* in a far corner was entirely blotted out until one of the players struck a match, revealing the banker's hand still guarding the upturned dice-box. The inevitable altercation ensued. The poker party had surrendered at discretion, and was now haggling over profit and loss by candle-light.

William Santon lay in his bunk with closed eyes, mysteriously motionless under the coarse blanket that covered his short, thick-set body from chin to heel. He was listening to the familiar sounds about him. They were the same as on a hundred other occasions, but to-night they had an added meaning for Bill. With luck, he would never hear them again, and for that reason they produced in him a certain wistfulness. He had had good times as well as bad in the "glory hole" of the old *Dynamic*.

Lying fully dressed, in a bath of perspiration, he reviewed the inventory of his possessions for the twentieth time. The canvas kit-bag, standing ready packed at the head of his bunk, contained one complete blue serge suit, with fancy vest, a selection of plain and viciously-striped shirts for work-days and festivals respectively, a pair of white buckskin shoes (stolen), three pairs of imitation silk socks with clocks, four celluloid collars, and as many ready-made ties of various design, a mouth-organ, a thing called a revolver by the firm that made it, and enough food for a week. Not such a bad trousseau, Bill flattered himself. Then there was——

"Wot's got yer, Bill?"

It was Horace, the second cabin smoke-room steward, and a "nosey" individual, if ever there was one.

Bill opened his eyes and blinked.

"Can't yer see when you're not wanted?" he muttered.

"Oh, I can see all right," said Horace, and in the semi-darkness Bill fancied he could feel the other's hawk-like eyes devouring the bulging kit-bag, even penetrating the blanket to his tell-tale boots.

"Then leave me alone," he snapped.

"Oh, I'll leave you alone all right," murmured the obliging Horace; "trust me. But you'll be creasing that fancy waistcoat of yours something crool if you don't watch it."

Bill leant over the edge of his bunk, regardless of exposed raiment, an ugly glint in his eyes.

"Look 'ere, 'Orace," he threatened, with quiet emphasis, "do you want yer faice pushed in?"

Seemingly, Horace did not. He slowly removed as many clothes as was his custom before retiring, and whistled "Keep the Home Fires Burning." Just before climbing in, he thrust his lean visage over the edge of Bill's bunk.

"Wait for Sydney," he urged in a hoarse undertone. "*I* am. Sydney's the place."

"Wot, with you?" said Bill, in eloquent contempt. "I'd sooner be hung!"

Horace went to bed, still whistling. He was one of those individuals it is impossible to insult.

The *Dynamic* was alongside the wharf at Sonome. The portholes of the "glory hole" were open wide, admitting the haunting, indescribable smell of the tropics. Bill breathed it through wide nostrils, the very air of mystery and freedom.

At three o'clock by the luminous hands

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of his nickel wrist-watch he slid from the bunk and approached the nearest porthole. The kit-bag had been packed to pass neatly through it, which it did, falling on the wharf with a thud that it seemed must wake the dead. Bill waited in suspense for upwards of a minute, then followed his trousseau, shouldered it, and made off down the landing—past the copra sheds, past the customs house, out on to the beach road. Even here he never paused, but crossed it and plunged into the bush.

He walked, stumbled, fought his way through palm grove and jungle, streaming with perspiration, until even his stocky legs ached to the marrow. Then he sat down on a fallen palm trunk, with throbbing pulses, to think.

He was free. He looked about him into the steaming darkness. A tree fungus glowed here and there with a ghostly green light. There were strange, unaccountable sounds. Mosquitoes feasted on his face and ankles and hands. He was free, and these were the South Sea Islands.

"Blimey!" muttered Bill.

It would have been interesting to hear the South Sea Islands' opinion of Bill Santon; but only a land-crab saw him at that moment, and retired, seemingly quite unimpressed by the vision of a Cockney in blue clothes, a rakish Panama hat, an impervious collar, and pointed boots, enthroned on a palm trunk in the primeval jungle of Sonomo.

At the first hint of dawn Bill struggled on, and presently, catching the glint of water through trees, emerged on the shore of a mist-shrouded lagoon.

A crane flew low over the water. The sun rose. Bill sat in the sand at the edge of a reed-brake, munching a sausage-roll and watching things that he had never watched before. The palms fringing the further shore caught fire, or so it seemed, until the sun rode clear of their feathery tops and bathed the world in golden light. Myriads of minute crabs crackled and scuttled in and out of their holes in the wet sand. The mist was lifting from the lagoon.

It all seemed unreal to Bill—the fabric of dreams. The nearest approach to it that he could recollect was a transformation scene at a pantomime. He felt it could not go on. The curtain would be rung down, and he would find himself on the seething pavement of the Lambeth Road.

The far-off hoot of a ship's siren filtered through the trees. Bill stirred uneasily, then smiled and lit a cigarette. Twice it was repeated at long intervals; then Bill lay back against the reed-brake, tilted his Panama over his eyes, and chuckled aloud in the ecstasy of his content. The *Dynamic* had sailed—sailed with the same old pyramids of plates in the galley, the same old steam and clatter and smell, but with a new entry in the ship's books—

Name.	*Age.*	*Rating.*
William Santon	26	Assistant Steward
Birthplace.		
London		DESERTER

And the Army? The Army was on the other side of the world, under his feet. William Santon slept.

In a little while a light native canoe stole out from some cove on the far side of the lagoon, paddled by a diminutive white figure half hidden under the wide brim of a solar topee. It was a girl, and a white girl; so much was evident when presently she scrambled forward and leant over the gunwale, staring fixedly down into the crystal-clear water. She knelt motionless in this position for a time, the canoe drifting idly, then dexterously lowered over the side, in turn, a piece of good red meat impaled on a vicious-looking hook, a short length of dog-chain, and perhaps five fathoms of stout line. The end of this she made fast to a thwart, and waited expectant.

In a surprisingly short time there was commotion on the surface of the lagoon. The line had tautened like a bowstring, and was cutting a clean semicircle in the water. The canoe commenced to move, gained way, and was soon skimming over the lagoon, with the girl paddling frenziedly to keep it bow on. It was soon evident that some fatal mistake had been made. The instant she ceased to paddle, the canoe turned broadside on. She had made the line fast amidships instead of for'ard, and it was too late to do anything but paddle madly until the canoe upset, which it did, promptly and effectually, a hundred yards from shore.

The solar topee floated away on a voyage of its own; the canoe continued its erratic progress over the lagoon; the girl came to the surface and struck out sturdily for shore. On the way she saw a head approaching her. It was close-cropped and bullet-shaped, but undoubtedly a head.

"Turn on yer back," it said peremptorily, when quite close, and, more from surprise than anything else, the girl obeyed. She felt a powerful support under her arms, a convulsive movement of legs, and a few



"He was sitting, elbows on knees, head between hands."

minutes later she crawled, dripping, up the sand.

"The canoe!" she exclaimed, almost before gaining her feet.

"Over there," said the owner of the head, jerking a stubby thumb in the direction of some overhanging mangroves.

"And it's caught fast!" cried the girl exultantly. "I wonder—do you think—it's much the biggest I've ever seen—sea, not river, and it's my first, alone—if the line hasn't parted—— Do you think——?"

These disjointed utterances became even less intelligible as she hurried, still dripping, along the beach.

For upwards of half an hour these two

fought in silence side by side on the edge of the lagoon. The line was taut and at rest when they reached it, but soon commenced to perform weird gyrations in the water, sometimes giving, sometimes snatching away a few feet of its length as they pulled on it steadily.

"This may go on for hours," panted the girl, with every appearance of pleasure at the prospect. "They're the best fighters in the world."

Her companion was hardly as enthusiastic. With his feet braced against a mangrove root, he tried his utmost to end the struggle at the earliest possible moment. By sheer brawn he dragged the line in foot by foot, until there was a mighty splashing a few yards from shore, the glimpse of a shining black carcase that suddenly turned to white, and a seven-foot shark lay writhing and snapping in the shallows.

"Blimey!" he observed, and flicked the perspiration from his brow.

"Knife, quick!" snapped the girl, and he watched her wonderingly as she stood ankle-deep in the water, waiting her opportunity for the *coup de grâce*, not a yard from the hideous jaws. A swift movement, and it was done. The girl returned to his side frankly triumphant.

"I *thought* I could do it," she said. "Selini makes such a tremendous fuss about it, you'd think it was difficult. It's only a matter of the right place, and——"

She broke off abruptly, seemingly just aware of the other's presence. Her frank grey eyes passed over him in rapid but all-embracing review—the homely, good-natured face, the viciously-striped shirt with sleeves rolled back over a muscular forearm.

"You must be very strong," she said admiringly.

"Middlin'," confessed the object of her attention, rolling down his sleeves.

The girl took an abrupt seat in the sand, and laughed merrily at the lagoon.

"Don't you think it's rather funny?" she said. "Here we've been struggling together at one thing and another for hours, and don't know who each other is—are—is—I never know which is right. My name's Miss Trenchard."

"Cecil Desmond, at your service," announced the other, with a grave inclination of his bullet head.

The girl looked up at him and smiled.

"Well, Mr. Desmond, you've certainly been of service, and I'm—— Thanks ever so much," she added impulsively. "I don't know what I should have done——"

"Oo, that's all right," said Mr. Desmond diffidently. "I didn't know you could swim like that, or——"

"Or you wouldn't have come in," laughed the girl.

Mr. Desmond had nothing to say to this. In fact, he had very little to say at any time, the girl noticed, and rather liked it; it added to the mysteries of who he was, what he was doing on Sonomo, and where he had come from. His accent baffled her.

"It's very hot," she said, for the simple reason that she could think of nothing else to say.

This somewhat trite observation—considering the thermometer registered ninety degrees in the shade—had the surprising effect of causing Mr. Desmond to burst into speech.

"Ain't it?" he agreed heartily. "I've never been so 'ot in me life."

"That's because you're from a cold climate, I expect."

"P'r'aps, though London can be warmish in the summer."

"London!" The girl sat bolt upright. "Have you come all the way from London?"

"All the wye," admitted Mr. Desmond.

"You know it well?"

The girl's hands were tightly clasped about her knees. Her eyes shone.

"Born and bred there. Camberwell. D'you know it?"

"I?" The girl laughed softly, wistfully, looking out across the lagoon. "I know nothing except this."

"And good enough, I should say."

She looked round at him with a little perplexed frown.

"You don't mean that—now?"

"Now?"

"Yes, when your country's at war."

Mr. Desmond winced—it was as though someone had struck him a physical blow—but he recovered himself instantly.

"You wouldn't think there was a war on, 'ere," he observed pleasantly.

"No, that's just it," said the girl bitterly. "And there *is*. That's why I hate Sonomo more than ever—the peace and quiet and pretty-prettiness of it, when others are going through everything that's horrible. Oh, it isn't right! It isn't fair!" she ended vehemently.

"Oo, I dunno," mused Mr. Desmond, staring thoughtfully before him.

"You couldn't say that if you hadn't been

through it all," the girl went on quietly. "It's easy to say then. But how do you suppose *I* feel, knitting socks in Sonomo when I ought to be in France, nursing?"

Apparently Mr. Desmond was unable to offer an opinion on the subject. A pause ensued, broken with almost startling abruptness by the girl's clear, quiet voice—

"What was your regiment, Mr. Desmond?"

"Thirty-second London," he answered promptly.

"Good old Londoners!" mused the girl. "I've read about them, and read about them, until I could almost see them—and now I *can* see one," she added, turning her frankly admiring gaze on Mr. Desmond, who studied the toe of a waterlogged but pointed boot. "You mustn't mind," she laughed, "and you'll have to go through a lot more with father. We don't often get a chance of seeing the men who have done things, here on Sonomo. Won't you come up to the bungalow for breakfast, and get it over?"

Mr. Desmond dug his heels into the sand.

"Fact is," he said uncertainly, "I came 'ere to get awye from all that. If you don't mind——"

"Of course you did," said the girl, scrambling to her feet, "and I won't pester you another minute. But if you could put up with just one evening, you don't know how it'd please father. He's a Londoner, and if I told him——"

"I'd rather you didn't," said Mr. Desmond hurriedly. "That is, not for a bit, anywye."

"Very well," agreed the girl, with a delightfully intimate nod of the head. "It's our secret—the Mystery of Sonomo! But where are you going to stay?"

"I 'ardly know yet."

Again the little frown of perplexity clouded the girl's face.

"Anyway, you'll be fishing in the lagoon," she suggested, "and I promise not to talk shop—war, that is."

Mr. Desmond grinned knowingly.

"Oo, I'll be 'ere all right," he assured her.

But the grin faded abruptly when the girl had waved him good-bye and disappeared, like some sprite of health and lightness, among the trees.

"'Struth!" murmured Mr. Desmond, and turned thoughtfully in the direction of a bulging kit-bag lying near a reed-brake.

That afternoon the inhabitants of Sonomo lagoon, including a venerable tree lobster and a family of pigeon, were treated to the spectacle of what at first sight resembled a perambulating cistern. In reality it was Mr. Cecil Desmond struggling under the burden of four sheets of corrugated iron and a sack of camp paraphernalia.

Up to a late hour the silence of the place was shattered by strange sounds, and that night Mr. Desmond slept under his own roof. Trust a Cockney.

When the girl came again to the lagoon, as she did in the afternoon of the next day, she stood amazed at the edge of the bush before handing her pony's reins to a native servant. Not twenty paces distant a weird but homelike structure had reared itself under the palms that fringed the water. Its roof was of glittering corrugated iron, supported on palm-trunk corner posts; the walls were of loosely-plaited reed. A pair of blue serge trousers and a viciously-striped shirt lay drying in the sun. A pot steamed over a camp fire, and, as though to complete the domestic scene, Mr. Desmond sat before his home, playing softly on the mouth-organ.

"Please don't stop!" pleaded the girl. But he lowered the instrument at sight of her, and some minah birds that had been strutting inquisitively a few yards distant flew off into the trees.

She stood for a moment—a dainty white figure against the dark-green background of the bush—and looked down on this strange little man with a smile on her lips and pained surprise in her eyes. She had just made a rather startling discovery—Mr. Desmond was anything but pleased to see her! The knowledge was intuitive, the sensation sufficiently novel to be at first painful, then interesting. For the first time in her short, inexperienced life she felt her company was not wanted, and already she longed to know why.

"This is simply splendid!" she exclaimed, to cover her embarrassment, and looking round on her father's property, disfigured by human habitation.

"Glad you like it," beamed Mr. Desmond. "I rather fancy it myself." But the girl knew that what he would like to have said was: "I don't want you; go away."

She seated herself in the grass and flicked stones with her riding-crop.

"No wonder you wouldn't tell me where you were going to stay," she said. "This is much better than the Settlement and the dirty old 'George.'"

"That's wot *I* thought," agreed Mr. Desmond—"more 'omely like. And I *must* 'ave quiet."

The girl looked at him under her long, dark lashes.

"You must have been through a lot," she said. "I've never met anyone from the real Front before. Won't you tell me about it? Not if it upsets you," she added quickly. "But I do so long to hear about it, and I won't worry you again."

Her voice was softly persuasive. Mr. Desmond regarded her appraisingly for a moment, then, apparently satisfied, took the deep breath of a diver before the plunge.

"It was like this 'ere, if yer want to know," he said suddenly, and with an unexpectedly dramatic gesture. "We was going over the top for the umpteenth time. No Man's Land was a marsh of shell-'oles, covered with mist. And they was sending some over, too, I give yer *my* word. But we went on, smoking and chatting, just like I am now. Some of us was dribbling a football, just to keep our minds orf it, like."

"I remember reading about that," murmured the girl.

Mr. Desmond paused and gazed out over the lagoon with the expression of one who recalls 'painful memories. The girl sat motionless, with wide eyes and parted lips.

"We got to the Boche parapet orl right—or some of us did, me amongst 'em—and then we was up against it. The trench was lou—full of 'em, great meaty blokes with bombs and bay'nets. I don't know wot 'appened then, until I found meself up against one of 'em—bay'net, 'and to 'and. 'E jabbed at me, and I dodged—pretty nippy on me feet, *I* am. Then I jabbed 'im—right in the middle of 'is faice——"

The girl gave a little cry and covered her eyes with her hands.

"Yer wanted to 'ear about it," said Mr. Desmond reproachfully.

"I do, I do!" pleaded the girl, recovering herself with alacrity. "Please don't stop."

"I got to," said Mr. Desmond. "That's all."

"All?"

"Yes. Someone chucked a bomb."

"Yes?"

"And I copped most of it—in the back. One bit went into me 'and."

He glanced carelessly at the injured member, and the girl's eyes followed, resting with awed veneration on an ugly but completely-healed scar.

"May I?" she asked timorously, and her cool fingers touched it lightly.

There is no telling what had been in Mr. Desmond's mind up to that moment, but whatever it was came suddenly to fruition. He leant forward and kissed the girl on the lips.

"Oh!" she gasped, and drew back, flushing prettily.

Mr. Desmond seemed no less startled at the event. The girl was the first to recover.

"Then—then you don't hate me?" she faltered.

"'Ate yer!" exploded Mr. Desmond.

And they sat in the grass, saying the things that have been said from the beginning, and presumably will be to the end.

When she had gone, Mr. Desmond lit a cigarette and gave himself up to reflections which, from his expression, were entirely pleasant.

One golden day succeeded another on Sonomo lagoon. This strangely assorted pair fished, shot pigeon with a lady's "22," and cooked what they killed, with laughter and song, over the camp fire. From the very divergence of their experience and upbringing they found each other entertaining to a degree. The girl, Mr. Desmond soon discovered, knew rather less of the ways of the world—especially his world—than the average cage-bird. At times her innocence almost frightened him. It always awed him. He was more careful of what he did and said in her presence than he had ever been in his life. And the girl? She regarded this strange man as the fount of all wisdom, humour, and courage—an inexhaustible well of information and quaint anecdote.

Then came the cloud. It was ushered on to the horizon in two short words—

"Father knows."

Mr. Desmond's heart sank like a stone.

"Oo told 'im?" he demanded brusquely.

"I don't know," the girl answered apologetically; "I think it must have been Seleni. I'm sorry."

Mr. Desmond did not answer. She sat quite close to him. The proximity of her stole over him like an opiate.

"Why do you mind so much?" she pleaded. "You must be rested now—ready to meet people again. Besides, he's not an ogre; he's an old dear. He says anyone I know he must know. It's only natural, after all. He told me to ask you to dinner this evening. He quite understands. You needn't talk about the War if you don't want to."

She said a great deal more, and at the end of it Mr. Desmond nodded his bullet head slowly in token of surrender.

The thing had to be faced, then. There were no such things as peace and quiet and freedom in the world. He had sought them

in the furthermost corner of the earth, and they were not there.

He prepared himself for the ordeal with the minutest care. The best blue serge suit was brushed, the pointed boots made to shine, the mechanical tie and fancy vest selected by a painstaking process of elimination. At seven o'clock he stood resplendent, his confidence almost restored. At seven-thirty he found himself approaching a rambling white bungalow up an avenue of crotons and screw pines.

A tall, lethargic gentleman in evening-dress levered himself out of a cane chair as Mr. Desmond climbed the verandah steps.

"Mr. Desmond, I believe," he said, with a pronounced drawl.

"That's right," beamed the guest.

"Won't you sit down? I believe you helped my daughter out of difficulties on the lagoon the other day."

"Oo, that's nothing," murmured Mr. Desmond.

"It is a good deal to me," said Colonel Trenchard, relapsing into the cane chair; "I am greatly obliged. Cocktail, or whisky and sparklet?"

The rest of the evening was shrouded in a roseate haze for Mr. Desmond. He had vague recollections of soft lights and sparkling glass, of attacking unaccustomed food with strange implements, and of talking with a fluency that surprised himself. Also he was aware that the girl had been present, though in a filmy dress that somehow transformed her from his companion of the lagoon into an ethereal being, infinitely remote. His host was Mr. Desmond's only doubt. His main impressions of the lethargic gentleman at the head of the table were his penetrating eyes and an uncanny ability to draw others without saying anything himself. However, Mr. Desmond retraced his steps down the croton avenue with the air of one who has left a good impression in a desirable quarter.

This belief might have remained with him throughout life but for one of those trivial incidents that have a knack of shaping destiny. His bootlace came untied, and he stopped to attend to it. That was all—all, except that during the process he heard a voice on the verandah of the bungalow. It was deep but resonant, and came to him with startling distinctness through the hot, still night—

"Was that a joke, Helen? You can't be serious. A guttersnipe! My dear child, he's never been in the Service in his life. Most likely running away from it. Allow me to judge. And you've been hobnobbing with him for over a week! It's preposterous! Have you no discrimination? No—but there, how could you have? It's the result of having no woman about the place. I must get someone from somewhere . . ."

There followed the sound of a chair pushed back and impatient steps up and down the verandah.

Mr. Desmond continued his progress down the avenue mechanically, and, after walking a short distance, subsided heavily at the side of the road.

He was sitting, elbows on knees, head between hands, staring into the dust between his feet, when the girl came upon him. Her hand touched his shoulder.

"You heard," she said. "I'm so sorry."

He looked up at her dazedly for a moment before a glint came into his eyes.

"'E's right," he said raucously. "Everything 'e's said is right. Now, wot about it?"

The girl stood silent before him in the moonlit road.

Mr. Desmond gave vent to a mirthless cackle and sprang to his feet.

"Cecil Desmond! Oo yus!" he cried ironically, and lapsed into a sort of jaunty fierceness. "I'm Bill Santon of Camberwell, and you ought to 'ave known it, if you was 'uman, which you ain't. And I'm running awye all right. I've run fifteen thousand miles without a stop to get away from it! Bombs! Bay'nets! I made this 'ole in me 'and with a tin-opener!" He extended his stubby fingers derisively. "'E's right. I'm a guttersnipe, *I* am——"

The tirade died down as abruptly as it had begun. The girl stood quite still, looking at him with her tranquil grey eyes.

"Wot about it now?" demanded Bill.

"It makes no difference," she answered quietly.

He looked at her a moment, then flung back his bullet head and laughed.

"No difference!" he mocked.

"There's still time to make him wrong about—about the running away. The rest doesn't matter."

The old feeling of awe came over Bill Santon. He went nearer, hesitantly. He took her in his arms.

"Oo, yus, it does," he said in a voice that trembled. "You'll learn all that some day. I'm going to fight for you!"

The last she saw of him was a short, thick-set figure hurrying down the road in the moonlight. He never looked back.

A KNIGHT OF THE AIR

By J. E. WHEELWRIGHT

Illustrated by Norah Schlegel

ERIC WOLFERSTONE looked down. Below him was mist—it seemed to have got there quite suddenly—mist was to left of him, mist was to right of him—in fact, all round him was mist. He had been very busy for an hour or more, practising various stunts—rolling, side-slips, spinning. From all this you will gather that Eric was in an aeroplane, and you will be quite correct. He was alone in a two-seater, carried no compass, and in the interest of these evolutions had more or less lost himself.

He flew low to gain his bearings, hither and thither, round and round—to observers below he seemed like an agitated hornet—lower and lower, till he sighted various objects which he fancied he located.

There surely was the Wellfields Pond, and here should be the sixteen-acre field at Mudford Park. It was getting dark. He decided to land. Ten minutes later Captain Eric Wolferstone, having crawled out of his seat through many brambles, and conscious of a bruised, troubled feeling all over, was emerging on hands and knees out of the most thorny quickset hedge ever encountered. The machine was badly mixed up in the same hedge.

There had been a mistake somewhere, he concluded, as he gazed round the cabbage-patch in which he found himself—cabbages are most unsuitable for landing. At the moment he was on all fours, and the ground was heavy clay. He righted himself, took one look at the "'bus," shook his head, and walked slowly round it. "Propeller smashed," he said, and moved away sadly.

Suddenly the mist lifted. Not far from him was more hedge, in the hedge a gate. The gate led up to a fair-sized house of dull red brick. He felt a bit shaky, and moved mechanically towards it.

"How I hate the smell of rotten cabbages!" he said to himself drearily. "If people must grow cabbages, why can't they eat them or burn them?"

He sniffed in disgust, looking at his bleeding hands, covered with clay and cabbage and blood. "Sorry I've bust up the 'bus.' Wonder if they'd let me have a wash and brush-up here, and a drink? I feel like sitting down on something, but not cabbages."

He walked up to the house. He seemed to have arrived at the back regions, so took a side-path and emerged on the front lawn. It was an oblong garden facing a road. In the middle of the round grass patch was a seat—a damp and sooty seat. Upon it was a decayed notice: "Seat for wounded soldiers to rest."

"Must have known I was coming," he said, as he sat down. "Doesn't seem crowded, anyway." The fog had now quite cleared, and he saw in the dusk that the garden was full of notice-boards nailed to the trees.

The largest one, near to the gate, pointed out the poisonous nature of alcohol in letters six inches long.

Eric felt sad. "No chance of a drink, I fear."

Another depicted a genial, elderly gentleman slapping a pale-faced boy on the back, saying: "We want you to go."

Another said: "Tighten your belt and frighten the Hun."

Another said: "Don't eat; save the money."

It was all very depressing. Eric sat on his damp seat and continued to lick the blood from his hands.

One gate was marked "Entrance," the other "Exit."

"Entrance" was labelled, as an after-

thought, "Not to be used." Eric had to make a tour of the exhibits in the garden before he found them all, then sat down again.

"I bet the blighter in this house is a puffy old boy of mature years. Wish they'd make the age limit seventy—put him in the front row!" Eric was undoubtedly feeling irritable.

Footsteps sounded on the gravel behind.

He started up and turned. "Just what I expected—little fat man, broadcloth coat, floppy felt hat, gold watch-chain on prominent waistcoat, woolly white beard, square-toed boots. Rather like the pictures of old Oom Paul one used to see," thought the young man.

"Ha, sir, I am indeed glad to see you have taken advantage of the rest offered you. May I ask——"

"My machine has come to grief in the hedge at the back of your house. Afraid I've strafed some of your cabbages. I think it will have to sit there to-night. It'll soon be dark, or I might send a lorry for it to-night."

The old gentleman beamed. "You are the first soldier who has ever sat upon this seat, and it has been here two years. Welcome, thrice welcome to Stag Glen! Come in and refresh yourself!"

He laid a pudgy hand on Eric's leather-covered shoulder, and he reluctantly followed the old man up the path, watching the coat-tails flap.

"I must escape," he thought, "after I have 'phoned for someone to take the 'bus.'"

"I will get you some Vito Elixir," said his new friend, when they were in the dining-room. "Very strengthening. And with a rest, a cup of Braino, and a biscuit, you will soon be yourself."

He brewed a strange decoction out of a packet. Eric drank it hastily. It was hot, anyway. He felt better. His host also gave him the run of the bathroom and a clean towel, and disappeared.

"Now to escape," said the young man, once more clean. "I'll go and 'phone." But his host, returning, would have none of that. "Not a word, my boy. I have seen the Scout-master. The Boy Scouts and special constables are to watch your machine, in relays, till morning. They will light fires and camp, and enjoy it, dear lads."

"Will they?" thought Eric. "Not my idea of an evening out. Hope they are fond of cabbages."

"And," continued the old chap, "we will chat the evening away."

Eric's blood froze. Caught in the toils of a pip-eater! What a fate!

Helpless, Eric became resigned. He must eat somewhere, he supposed, also sleep. This suburb seemed too respectable to produce a shop, or restaurant, or even a pub. He resolved to stay—feign a sudden giddiness after supper—get to bed. After all, it was decent of the old boy to want to feed him.

Judging by the old gentleman's contours, there should be solid nourishment.

He was doomed to disappointment. The lentil in its most horrible forms was the main article of diet—it crept into everything, fried, boiled, mashed—also the haricot bean was in evidence.

His host babbled on. Eric's thoughts wandered. What would they think at headquarters? He had already sent a telephone message from the house; they would know by this time.

He turned and looked at the clock.

Two photographs caught his eye, one on each side of it, in curly fretwork frames.

On the left was the old man, highly flattered, stopping before it revealed the waistcoat; the pair to it was that of an extremely charming girl's head. Eric's eyes brightened as he looked at it—a smooth dark head, beautifully shaped, the longest eyelashes, and a rather demure expression.

"You are looking at my frames," said his host. "My handiwork!"

"The photos——" Eric began.

"Ah, mine was taken lately. Very creditable, I fancy. Adds a year or two to one's age, though." He waited expectantly. But Eric's eyes were fixed on the girl's photo. The man had mentioned a deceased wife and also a daughter.

"The other——" Eric tried again.

"The other—— Ah, here comes our anti-nervo date coffee—a discovery of my own! By the way," his host continued, "my daughter is away to-night. I have only one—my ewe lamb. She has been helping to get up a dance, and left early. Ah-h-h" —his beard waggled—"an idea seizes me! Youth to youth! You would doubtless like to go to the dance? It is a mere boy and girl frolic in the parish hall at Pinchester. No ceremony—just a few soldier lads and winsome lassies. I am sure you would like to be among them. I have a meeting to attend in the village near, and will drive you there. You shall go and foot it featly in the merry

dance with my daughter, and return with her in the cab."

Eric wished he would not talk Shakespeare, or whatever language it was.

"My kit," he said doubtfully, looking at his muddy boots. Also he was conscious at the moment of wearing three complete sets of "gent's all-wool underwear." It had been bitterly cold going up. However, he looked at the photo again. "I'm on," he said.

His host telephoned for a cab, a very one-horse affair when it came.

Arrived at the door of the parish hall, the sound of a piano, heartily thumped, greeted them, and many feet appeared to be raising a great dust inside.

"I will introduce you to a steward and then leave you," said his friend. "Sir"—he touched on the arm a weary-looking man who wore a cherry-coloured rosette—"will you introduce my friend—— By the way, what is your name?" he added.

"Little," said Eric hastily. His friends all called him "Little by Little." His height was six feet three. Eric's real name had been rather boomed in the picture papers of late. *The Daily Errata* had procured some inaccurate accounts of a feat of his, sorted out the best-looking photo they could find in their pack, and put his name under it. He had done some good jobs, and been awarded a V.C., but had not done the particular job assigned to him in the paper. Hence the concealment. But his name was pretty well known, and he did not want to be a lion.

"Shall I introduce you?" asked the steward. He was delighted to have this personable young man to hand round.

"May I look round a bit first?" said Little by Little. "I've had a hard day. Two hours' stunting, and a small crash and a cabbage strafe, and a feed of lentils. Don't hand me over to an anxious mother with seven plain daughters!"—this in a whisper.

"All right; look about you." Eric looked about. No sign of the pretty daughter; plenty of pretty girls, though, everywhere. He caught sight of something *bouffante* and pink and rather *chic* leaning against a doorway; it looked attractive, with white shoulders.

"This—in pink," he said, nudging the steward.

"Captain Little, Miss—er—ha—ha—hum——"

"Can I register with you for some dances?" asked Eric.

"Sorry. Nothing doing—sold out!"

"Then all these unused coupons are valueless?" said the young man, holding out a blank card.

She looked at him; the effect of her was decidedly pretty. "There are such things as substitutes," she smiled.

"How about me for one here and there? I have eaten all the detestable substitutes there are this evening, so I know all about them."

She looked up at him, smiled greatly, crossed out all the latter half of her programme names, and handed him the cards.

"Write yours," she murmured.

Eric realised the embarrassment of riches. He felt as if he had asked for a rasher of bacon and been given an entire herd of swine.

However, he wrote "Little" across the space.

"Why was I born so beautiful?" he wondered. "This gives me no time to hunt out the daughter or anyone else."

He felt a little sulky. At the first dance he found her heavier than might be expected with such a gossamer frock; the second he found her conversation not so bright as her appearance—rather stupid, in fact; the third, she seemed to go over a bit at the ankle, and was evidently wearing tight shoes. At the fourth he gathered she had stubby fingers and bit her nails, and was dull as a rabbit. He did not, therefore, sparkle himself—there were silences. At the fifth he wandered off, presumably in search of refreshments for Miss Pink. Finding the refreshment table deserted, he stumbled into some back, or washing-up, regions, and there tapped, so to speak, the very fountain-head of the claret cup. In other words, he found two bottles of claret sitting in a pail; he also found a young, hot cadet looking at the same.

"What about these?" asked the cadet.

"What about them?" echoed Eric.

"Seem to have been forgotten."

"It is better to forget."

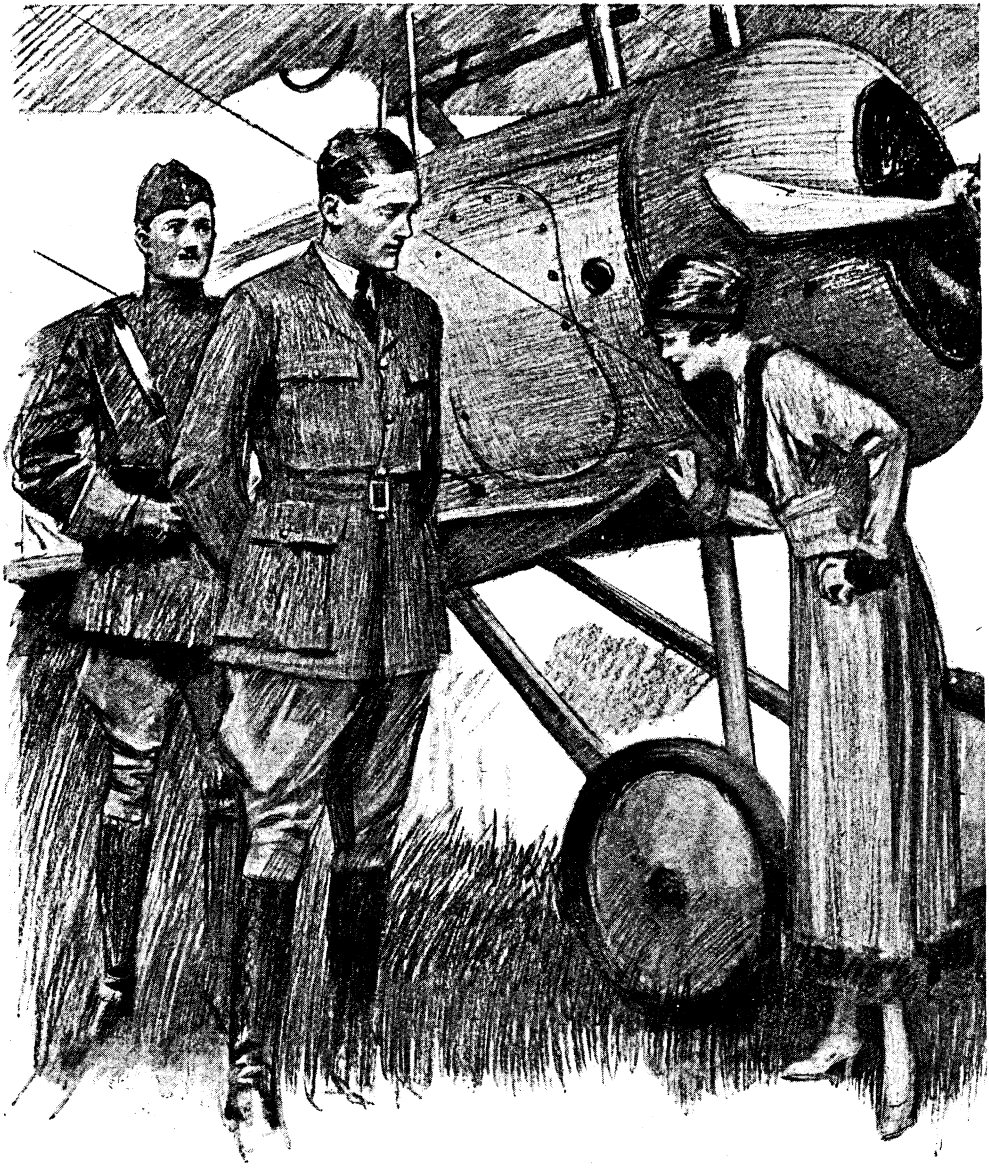
"One each," they said simultaneously, as the cadet produced a fierce knife with a corkscrew. They found two mugs; the rest was easy.

"Not such awfully putrid stuff for a show like this," said the cadet, a youth fresh from Eton, when his bottle was empty.

"Vinegary, but I've tasted worse," agreed Eric.

Later in the evening the claret cup was observed to have run dry, but at the moment Eric emerged, refreshed.

Suddenly he forgot about pink tulle, for



"The words filled Eric with embarrassment . . . He looked at Lady Susan, who was suppressing smiles.

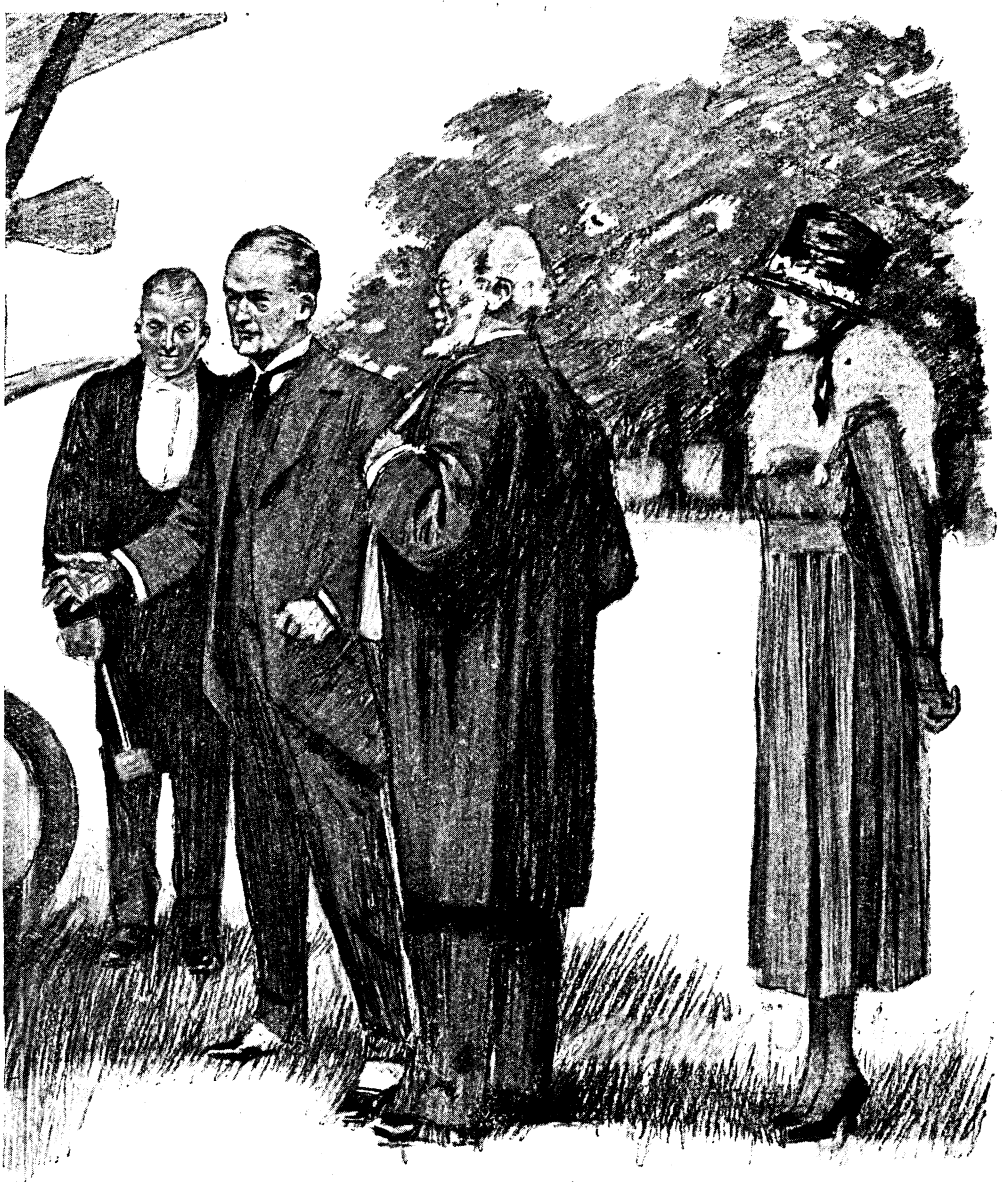
there, all alone, sitting in the shade of a large pot of flowers near the piano, was the girl of the photograph. He edged round her and observed the profile. She turned and looked up; very blue eyes met his. She wore a little skimpy but soft black frock; round her neck some imitation pearls—obviously imitation, because, if real, they were a fortune.

His heart beat; the world seemed gayer. He put the pot of blossoms between himself and pink tulle, and cast side-glances at the dark head.

"I say," he gasped, going nearer, "I'm a stranger here. The man who introduced me has vanished, and I feel so lonely. Do you think I might talk to you, or dance, or something? I have met your father—we met this evening—and he asked me to look out for you."

The dark girl smiled; it was an exquisite smile. "Yes," she said, with great self-possession, "do come and talk to me. You look like a person likely to have had adventures."

"Will you take one turn first?"



The Earl came to Eric with outstretched hands. 'I think I see it all now,' he said. 'I apologise.'"

"Poor girl!" he thought. "Rather neglected."

The piano had begun to beat out its tune.

"Very well." They danced. She danced like a little black fairy. They danced that one through, and sat breathless and contented, then another, then another, and another.

Eric became conscious of his heavy garments.

"Let us go into the garden," he said; "there is a seat, and it is not cold."

As they went out, he cast a glance at pink tulle. She was talking to an understudy partner, and looking as black as pink can look.

They passed the empty claret bottles. "You won't be afflicted with any more of that decoction—we've finished it—vinegar and red ink. All the same, I've tasted worse. Wonder where they got it?"

She smiled—seemed really amused.

Eric wondered how such a fatuous buffer as his host could have such a charming daughter. He talked to her kindly to draw

her out. They came from the general to the particular.

"Do you know I took a toss on to your cabbage-patch to-day?" he said, and her eyes opened wide.

"And I have dined with your pater, and he is putting me up. I think it is ripping of him—he was awfully good to me."

She continued to look at him, forehead knitted in perplexity. Her very, very blue eyes gazed searchingly into his through a perfect tangle of eyelashes.

"Are you sure?" she said. "When I last saw papa——"

"Yes, sure," he answered eagerly; "he showed me your photo. So I will see you to-morrow, I hope——"

At that moment the tired pianist struck up "God Save the King." Eric stood at the salute.

Going back to the hall, they found it nearly empty. "Good nights" were being said.

"Your father said you would drive me home. Do you mind?" he asked.

"Really? Yes, here is the car. I shall be very pleased. A hireling car—our own is gone. Will you get in?"

They were silent as the car whirled through the darkness. It seemed to be a much greater distance going home than it had been coming. It stopped at a small gate in a wall. "We will get out here and walk," she said. She flashed a torch and showed him a narrow path to a side-door of the house, and opened it with a key.

"Up those stairs." She pointed to narrow stairs, turning on the light. "The second door on the left. That is the casual ward we keep for stray visitors: people come so suddenly these days. The bathroom is opposite; electric light switch is just inside. Good night."

It was all over in a minute. Eric ran up the short stairs; she switched off the light and vanished through a baize door.

He entered his own room cautiously, turned the light, and sank into a chair with a loud groan.

He did not feel in the least as if an ice-cold hand had clutched his heart, but he did realise quite clearly that he had made an awful hash of it—that he was in the wrong house, and there would be sad trouble in the morning. The only bright thing about it was that it was the right girl. He had not even given his own name, worse luck! He felt he was the man who had taken the wrong turning, and had done everything he ought not to have done the livelong day. "I must get a new mascot," thought Eric.

To-morrow morning there would be some bad half-hours, but to-morrow morning he would at least be clean. Here he took off his boots and put them outside the door; caught sight of the bathroom, tested the water, found it hot, parboiled himself, and crawled soothed to bed. His thoughts were beginning to merge into the fog of dreams when something said "Ping!" A clock—a hateful striking clock—in the room. It must be now a quarter past twelve. It would make that noise—only worse—next quarter. At that moment there was a sudden sharp snap outside the door close to his head. Hoo-hoo! Every nerve jumped. A cuckoo clock, by all that was hideous, as well!

Eric's words addressed to the cuckoo are quite unprintable. "I will—I must—I am determined to be asleep before that yapping bird hoots again."

The next quarter found him awake, tense and waiting. Ping! Ping! Pause. Hoo-hoo! Hoo-hoo!

"I'd rather face Archies," he said, jumping out of bed. Where was he? Where was the light? Giddy with irritation and sleep, he felt round the walls in the dark. He located a heavy muffled tick, the tick of an expensive clock, and found it, large, square, cold to the touch and heavy. He heaved it up in his arms with an effort. He would secrete it in the bathroom. Its little devil-brother, the cuckoo, he could deal with easily—submerge, if necessary. He would have to get up and let them loose in the morning; he always woke early.

He took the cold, apparently marble object in his arms in the dark and edged round the room; his bare feet he used to feel his way as the sensitive feelers of a shrimp.

A sharp pain in the toe warned him he had reached the door-jamb. His lovely burden said "Ping! Ping! Ping!" next his heart.

"Shall have to take you further than the bathroom," he said, addressing the clock; "your voice is so strong." He deposited it outside the door.

Hoo-hoo! Hoo-hoo! Hoo-hoo! He reached up, unhooked the songster, and laid it in a jumble of chains and weights on the floor.

"Bird thou never wert, and never wouldest

be again if I had my way. You sing flat, too."

He stooped and heaved up the big clock. In doing so he found the electric switch and turned it on. As he rose he found himself gazing into the steely eye of a little man. He should have been gazing down the barrel of a revolver which the little man was pointing at him. But the man was short, so that the revolver pointed straight in the face of—presumably—his own clock.

"Hands up, or I fire!" came from him in a voice hoarse in its emotion.

"Bow-wow!" said Eric. "I can't drop this clock."

He placed it carefully on the floor. "Is this the butler, I wonder, or the master? Do butlers wear mauve pyjamas? I have never seen one in pyjamas. I rather like this little man—seems brave as a lion."

He glanced up at him from the floor—at the tight-set lips and high forehead. Far back on the forehead hair suddenly sprang out in a forest of greyish curls, at that moment standing well out round his head.

"Now, sir!" said he of the revolver, his sensitive nostrils quivering as he looked his captive up and down. Well he might! Eric became conscious of his costume, which, as he had brought no lingerie with him, can better be imagined than described. "So I've caught you, have I? I thought I heard a noise."

"Yes, it was the clocks—nasty, noisy beggars! Enough to disturb anyone." He stooped and looked at the one he had been carrying, to gain time.

It was a silver affair, mounted on ebony. On it was inscribed: "Presented to the Lady Susan, daughter of the Earl of Greenfields, on her twenty-first birthday, by the tenants of the estate." The date was present-day.

The clock rumbled. Ping—ping—ping—ping! Pong! One o'clock. The heart of the cuckoo was probably broken. Eric thought he heard it hiccup.

"Have you the grace to be ashamed of yourself?" said the man, still keeping the revolver pointed at full cock. "I suppose you are one of these smart modern burglars one reads of. Scoundrel!"

Eric jumped. That revolver might go off if his opponent became excited. Evidently not the butler, by his accent.

"A clumsy scoundrel, too. I have heard you moving about for hours. Stupid boggler! A pretty fellow——"

"Thank you," said Eric, smoothing his hair. Then, more gravely: "I'm sure you won't believe me, sir——"

"I'm sure I will not," from the other.

"—but I am perfectly harmless. I was under the impression I was invited here. Quite a misapprehension, I see now. I landed my aeroplane on a hedge, *viâ* a cabbage-patch, in the mist. A gentleman gave me shelter. I met a young lady at a dance afterwards whom I took to be his daughter. She turned out to be someone else, you understand—I don't yet know who—and as I was asked to sleep at the house of this other man, and I thought she was her—I mean the lady was her—well, here I am. You understand?"

There was a pause—a blighting pause.

"The story you have concocted is unmeaning gibberish. The most charitable conclusion I can come to is that you are drunk and have found your way in somehow. You may be a lunatic; you may be an escaped convict; you may be after clocks only. In any case, you appear to be unarmed, therefore more or less harmless."

"My dear sir, it really is true. I honestly thought I was asked to sleep here. Look at my boots!"

There they certainly were, muddy boots, neatly together in the proper place for boots, outside the door.

Inside the room was leather raiment and other insignia of his calling scattered freely about the room.

"On the other hand, look at my clock! I am bewildered, nonplussed. I admit your extraordinary coolness—that makes it worse—but I have grave suspicions, very grave." Still he kept Eric covered with the revolver.

"Keep him calm," thought Eric. "I'm sure that revolver will be off in a minute."

"Sir, do anything you like with me, but let us sleep now and explain in the morning, without firearms. As you see, I have already been to bed for a bit. Tell you what! We are both tired. Take away all my clothes and my boots and socks, and so on. I believe it is done in the best lunatic asylums."

"I agree," said the older man. "The window is safe. I will sleep with my door open, and lock you in. Remember, at the least movement I fire."

"Crikey! That's dangerous for the passers-by," said the young man. "Better put up a red flag and a warning notice." He divested himself even of the clothing he wore, and jumped hastily between the sheets. From this safe ground he watched his adversary carefully collecting all his

oddments strewn about. He had occasionally to lay down the revolver, and he made two journeys with the garments.

Then peace reigned.

But his captor put his head in to say: "The pearls my daughter wears are imitation. Her own are at the bank."

Eric buried his face in the pillow and laughed silently, with fear of the revolver.

"Glad I had that tub," thought he. "I couldn't bath with a revolver looking at me. Call me early, mother dear, for I'm to be Queen of——"

Here he fell asleep.

Next morning Eric woke early. The first sound he heard was laboured breathing outside the door.

"Old boy at it again," he yawned. "Morning, sir!" he cried cheerily. "Slept well?" He heard far away his enemy, the clock, strike seven times.

The door opened a few inches. All his garments came in, one by one, at the end of a lilac flannel arm, except the boots. Also a can of hot water. Eric watched them. The hot water was a thoughtful touch, anyhow.

"I say, sir—awfully sorry—but can you lend me a razor?"

The door shut again, and was locked, opened again and admitted a safety razor, shut again.

"Be ready in half an hour," said a voice.

"Ghostly, silent business," Eric muttered to himself. He looked out of the window and found he was in the sort of house generally described as a "stately pile" looking on a park.

At seven-thirty the door opened again.

The little man was there, with the boots nicely cleaned.

"Oh, really, this is too bad! You mustn't wait upon me like this!"

Eric smiled.

"Silence, fellow!" The man looked commandingly at Eric. "I cleaned these boots myself, as I did not want an unnecessary explanation with the servants."

Eric looked well and sleek, but he felt a qualm or two. His story would not sound convincing, he knew. He felt he liked his enemy, and wished to convince him very much. But he had a foreboding.

His host, saying "Follow me," piloted him down to a remote corner of the billiard-room. He sat down—bade the young man stand.

"Now begin your story," he said.

Eric glanced round uneasily for the revolver, and began.

He continued for some time—for pages and pages, in fact—giving this entire history. A weak point was that he did not remember the name of the house into which he had fallen last night, nor did he know the old gentleman's name. He did not even seem perfectly certain of his own.

His inquisitor looked extremely dignified this morning. His curls looked as if a steam-roller had been over them, so neat and flat were they. His whole personality conveyed an impression of delicate fastidiousness.

The sensitive mouth shut firmly, and he gazed keenly at Eric as he completed his tale.

"H'm!" he said. "If this amazing tale be true, well and good. If not, I suppose I must hand you over to the military police. I have seen my daughter this morning, and her account of your doings tallies, as far as she knows, with your own. Your name, she said you told her, was Captain Little. Have you no card?"

"This is where I slip again, I believe," thought Eric. "Why did I seek obscurity by giving a nickname? I shall be arrested."

He fumbled in a pocket and produced a card.

"Captain Eric Wolferstone."

"Why, we have heard a great deal about Captain Eric Wolferstone, V.C.—a V.C. gained for distinguished bravery in connection with the Zeppelin. My daughter has the photograph cut out of a newspaper, as she admired his achievement. But you have given a false name, then. I will call her. If the photo is that of yourself, I shall feel that is something, anyway, towards clearing this up."

At that moment the door opened. His little friend of last night entered, very exquisite in a grey frock.

Eric, seeing them together, realised at once that they were father and daughter—the same small perfection of form and feature.

"Good morning," she said, bowing to Eric.

"Dearest," said her father, "fetch the photograph we were looking at, the other day, of Captain Wolferstone, V.C."

"Here, dad," she said, taking it from the leaves of a book. "I use it as a bookmark."

The father looked at it. It represented a fair, fat young man with a circular face. Eric was lean and dark.

There was a silence.

"Will you listen a little more?" said Eric. He began to lose hope.

He told them the rest of the story—explained his real exploit for which he had the V.C. "I think some funny joker sent them this photo, or else they just took the first that came." There was a long, dreadful pause.

"I fear we must hand you over to the authorities," said the father regretfully.

Eric looked at the daughter.

In the silence that ensued his eyes wandered to a picture at the other end of the room. It was startlingly like the little man, though the dress was of the Stuart period.

"Edward," it was called, "fourth Earl of Greenfields."

"I believe he's been an earl all the time, and never told me," thought the young man, "and I'm afraid the girl is the Lady Susan."

At that moment a butler entered on tiptoe and in a state of subdued excitement, carrying absent-mindedly a gong-stick.

"Beg pardon, my lord, but there is an aeroplane down near the town. Some mechanics have come and brought a new propeller, and are able to get it going, but they have lost the pilot. He has been missing since last night. There is a great hue and cry. But they have a clue. A young lady at the house seemed to think they would find him here."

"My 'bus!'" said Eric, excited. "There you are—corrobative—corroborrotive—what is the word?—evidence. Where is she? What is the name of the house? It is a red-brick house, with a garden full of notice-boards in front."

"That's right, sir," said the butler. "Behind Stag Glen it is—Mr. Bradshaw's house."

"Stag Glen—that's the name. How it all comes back to me!" said Eric. "And Bradshaw, too, a direct descendant, I'm sure—that talent for time-tables has burst out in posters!"

At that moment there was the familiar burr of an aeroplane. "Sounds like mine," said Eric, with mouth open.

Nearer, nearer, over the house, close down it came.

"My lord, they are landing in the park," said the butler, forgetting himself, running to the window in his excitement. They all followed eagerly.

It was indeed. Down at the far end of the park it settled gracefully.

The party—butler, gong-stick and all—went out of the French window to meet it.

The pilot walked up the field. Beside him walked a girl, short of frock, high of heel, a radiant hat bound firmly on her head. With a feeling that the French describe as a *frisson*, Eric recognised Miss Pink of last night.

"Oh, there you are!" she said. "I thought so."

Eric at the moment happened to be standing beside the dark girl he now had discovered was the Lady Susan. She must be the owner of that awful clock.

"Yes, here I am. Ha, ha!" He laughed uneasily at the pink girl, now in blue, who looked scathingly first at him and then at his companion.

Eric went up to the other pilot. "So you got her going?"

"Yes; it was a two hours' job. But we've fixed the new propeller. They took her to a meadow in a lorry. This lady seemed convinced we should find you here, so I thought I'd bring her over, as I knew the park could be landed in."

Eric and the pilot put their heads together, under pretext of examining the new propeller.

"I couldn't stop this girl coming," said Eric's friend; "seems to have taken a great fancy to me. Said to go up in a 'plane was the dearest wish of her heart. Who is the little man and your little dark friend?"

"Look out how you speak to him," said Eric—"he's an earl. And the girl's his daughter, the Lady Susan. Remember the *the*. That's part of it. I say, don't let's whisper. I'm in awful hot water as it is; they think I came to steal the clocks and pearls. Come and talk to them, and tell them I am innocent——"

At that moment, dashing up the drive, black coat-tails flapping, Homburg hat squashed on, bending well over his bicycle, appeared Mr. Bradshaw, the man of the notice-boards.

He jumped off the machine, throwing it on the grass with dramatic effect, and came up to the Earl. Bowing low, he pressed his hat on his waistcoat.

"My lord, he is found! You are thrice welcome to our guest—our one-time honoured guest, now yours. But"—he turned to Eric—"why leave us so abruptly? My little daughter was grieved."

The daughter! Eric saw it now. Of course, the pink girl would be his daughter.

"All a mistake," spluttered Eric. He gave, as well as he could, his explanation about the photograph to the assembled semicircle.

Mr. Bradshaw beamed before the Earl and his daughter But they did not look at him. Their eyes were fixed on Eric and the other pilot.

"Ah, Lady Susan," he continued, unsnubbed, "your photograph, I am afraid, is the real culprit. Since you were so kind as to open our little bazaar, and so charming as to sign that one, it has been the honoured companion of my own upon my humble mantelpiece. Beauty and the Beast! Ha, ha!

"And it was too kind to give us some of the famous Overlea claret for our little festivity of last night, and even to be present for an hour at the dance."

Eric caught the last words, which filled him with embarrassment—especially the reference to the claret. He had called it red ink—vinegary!

He looked at Lady Susan, who was suppressing smiles. The Earl came to Eric with outstretched hands. "I think I see it all now," he said. "I apologise. But you admit it was puzzling to find a strange young man in eccentric costume carrying away our clock at one in the morning."

"Oh, beastly queer," said Eric. "Anyone would think it looked fishy. The *nom de guerre* put you off, too. But you ask this chap my name."

"Oh, this is Captain Eric Wolferstone, the V.C., all right. But I expect he's kept it dark. He hates being a lion, and wouldn't send a photo to the paper, so they invented one."

"And you really *are*, then——" said Lady Susan. Her eyes glowed.

A feeling of comfort and faith and hope began to steal over Eric.

The butler suddenly became conscious of the gong-stick.

"I was just about to sound the gong for breakfast, my lord, when the interruption came. I will serve breakfast now."

Eric managed to get in an aside to his friend:

"I say, whisper to Miss Bradshaw, 'Fly with me!' and get her off the horizon somehow. Do, there's a good chap!"

The friend managed it quite well. The party had the excitement of seeing them soar off together. Papa Bradshaw was assured that the young pilot was one of the very safest and surest that could be obtained. He followed on his bicycle, gazing upward. The gong boomed sonorously.

The Earl linked his arm in the young man's.

"Come up and have some breakfast. I am delighted to believe your story. A genuine invitation this time. By the by, I had to tell a fearful untruth about those pearls. My daughter's pearls are priceless, and she will wear them always. I certainly thought you were after them and the clock."

Eric laughed into her eyes.

"I have them on now." She pulled them out from the neck of her frock.

Eric thoroughly enjoyed his breakfast, and ceased to feel at all like the morning after the night before.

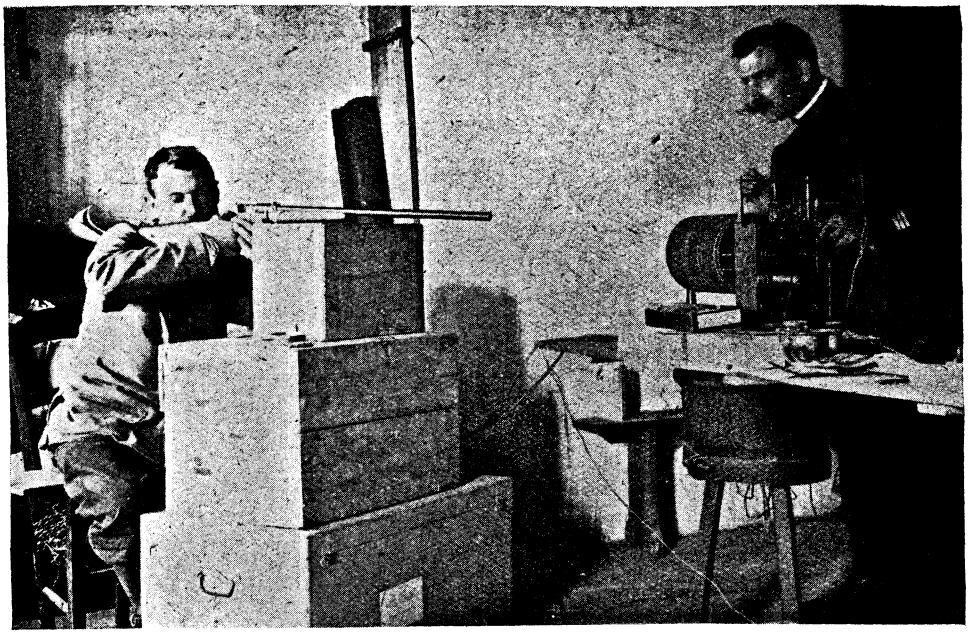
There were beautiful portraits, past and present, of various Lady Susans, but Eric looked much more at the original.

"I wish I knew better how to address an earl," he thought. "There used to be one at Rugby, but we called him 'Worm.'"

Still, Eric must have been a success, because he eventually stayed to lunch.

And many subsequent lunches.

You can guess the rest. It got into the papers as "Romance of the Air: V.C. Bird Man to Wed Peer's Daughter."



STUDYING THE "FUNCTIONAL PLASTICITY" OF A CANDIDATE.

TESTING THE NERVES OF FRENCH MACHINE-GUNNERS

A PSYCHO-PHYSIOLOGICAL LABORATORY AT THE FRONT

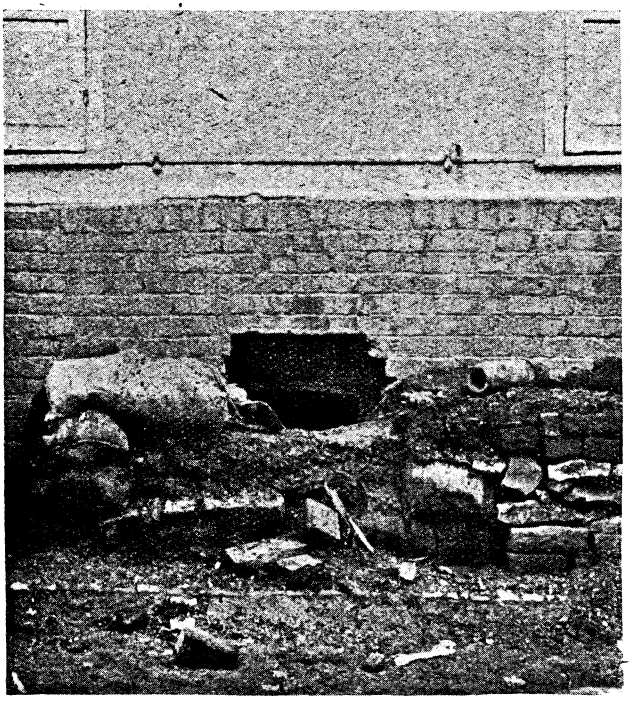
By GEORGE FREDERIC LEES

Photographs by Jacques Boyer, Paris.

FRENCH scientists have shown themselves wonderfully alert to the possibility of applying their methods usefully in the present War. At the outbreak of hostilities each specialist stepped automatically, as it were, into his appointed place, and, encouraged by the Government and the military authorities to give the best service of which his brain was capable, rendered invaluable aid to the cause of his country and that of the Entente Powers. Particularly did our Allies show they had a peculiar aptitude for what is called psycho-physiological investigation — that is, the building up of a series of tests, some of them mental, others physical, by means of which a candidate for some special work in the army is made to reveal his ability to do that work.

Such tests are applied in the case of prospective aviators. A medical examiner, sitting in his laboratory at home, with recording instruments before him, is able to say whether a man who has never been in an aeroplane will make a successful pilot or observer. Apart from the ordinary tests to see if his sight, heart, and lungs are in perfect order, a searching inquiry is made into the candidate's psychomotor reactions and the degree of his emotivity. For as

Professor Charles Richet laid down: "The principal danger which confronts an aviator resides in his very psychology. Above all, he must keep cool, retain mastery over himself, avoid exaggerating his reflex actions, know how to utilise them rapidly, and have complete control over his movements." The programme of these tests was drawn up at the end of 1915 by Dr. Camus, Fellow of the Paris Faculty of Medicine, and Dr. Nepper, Chief of the Laboratory of Pathological Physiology at the College of France. By means of a D'Arsonval chrono-



ENTRANCE TO PROFESSOR J. M. LAHY'S LABORATORY IN THE CELLAR OF A RUINED HOUSE ON THE SOMME FRONT.

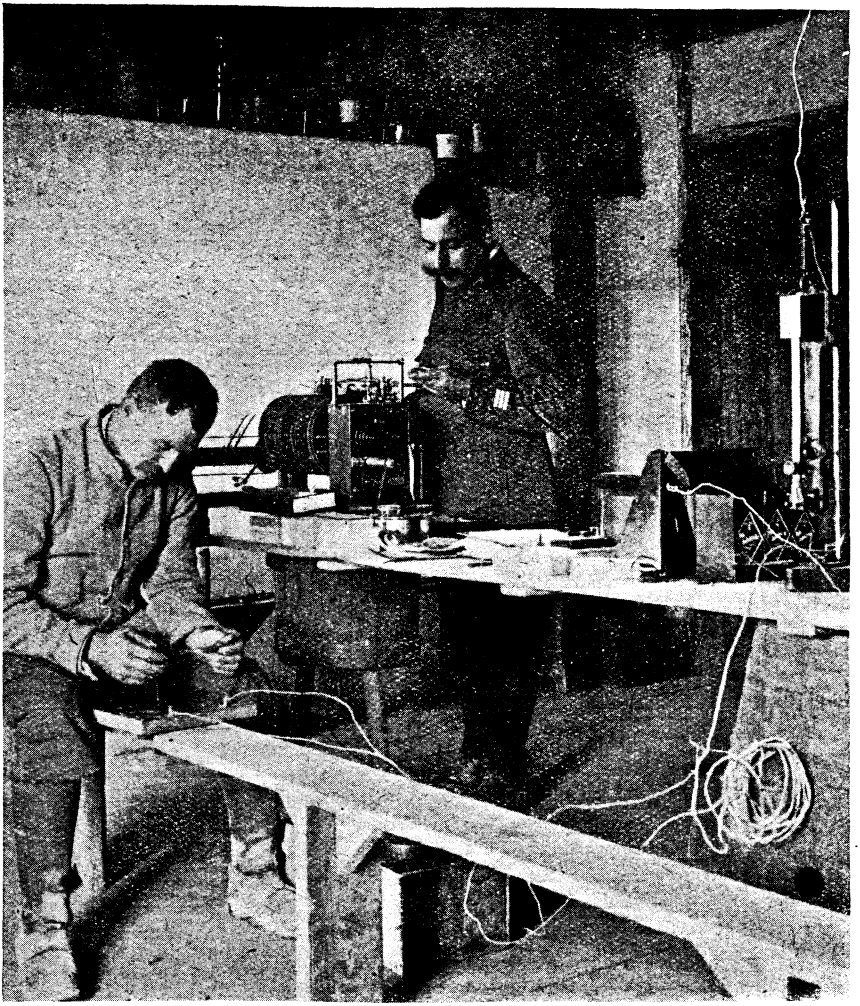
graph—an electric apparatus with a recording needle which revolves round a dial marked with a hundred graduations in one second—the quickness with which a candidate perceives a given impression, whether visual, auditory, or tactile, is accurately determined. Repeated experimentation has proved that the indices of a normal man in the case of visual, auditory, and tactile reactions are $\frac{19}{100}$ of a second, $\frac{14}{100}$, and $\frac{14}{100}$ respectively. A celebrated French aviator—recently killed, after many victories had been placed to his name—showed most exceptional rapidity during these tests, his indices of reaction being as follows: 17·9 for sight, 13·6 for touch, and 13·3 for hearing. Candidates suffering from any effects of alcohol, morphine, nicotine, or other poisons, as well as those who are in poor physical and nervous condition, find that their disabilities are unerringly recorded by the D'Arsonval chronograph. When finding out their emotivity they wear a pneumograph, which inscribes their respiratory curves on a smoked cylinder, hold a trembler, which similarly indicates their trembling, whilst their vasomotor variations are simultaneously recorded by the Hallion and Comte plethismograph. Emotion is provoked in various ways, but generally by a revolver shot fired behind the candidate.

The French, who are a scientific nation, never under any circumstances depart from the faith which is in them. They resort to psycho-physiological investigation in every case in which high efficiency in army work is necessary. Not only candidates for aviation, but also those for ambulance driving and the working of machine-guns are passed through a number of tests, based on the teachings of Binet, Richet, Camus, and Nepper, somewhat similar to those I have already summarised.

Exceptional interest is attached to the tests for gunners and feeders, which I propose to describe in detail in this article, for they were carried out, not in a quiet Parisian laboratory, but in one that was almost constantly under fire—in fact, an underground laboratory installed in the cellar of an abandoned house on the Somme Front. Moreover, the experimental work preliminary to building up these tests was carried out by a young officer, Professor J. M. Lahy, who has specialised in psycho-physiology, on his own initiative and in whatever spare moments he could find during a period of very great military activity. It would be difficult to point to a finer example of devotion to science.

At the time he began his investigations the St. Etienne machine-gun was in use. This weapon has now been superseded, but for the first thirty months of the War it was the standard French model. In order to make Professor Lahy's methods clear to my

readers, it is necessary for me to explain to them that this St. Etienne machine-gun is fed, not by cartridge-belts, but by clips containing twenty-four cartridges. These clips are hooked at each end, and the feeder, in order to keep a continuous supply of ammunition running through the gun, must hook each clip into the preceding one.



DETERMINING HOW FAST AND HOW LONG A PROSPECTIVE MACHINE-GUNNER CAN REPEAT A SIMPLE MOVEMENT.

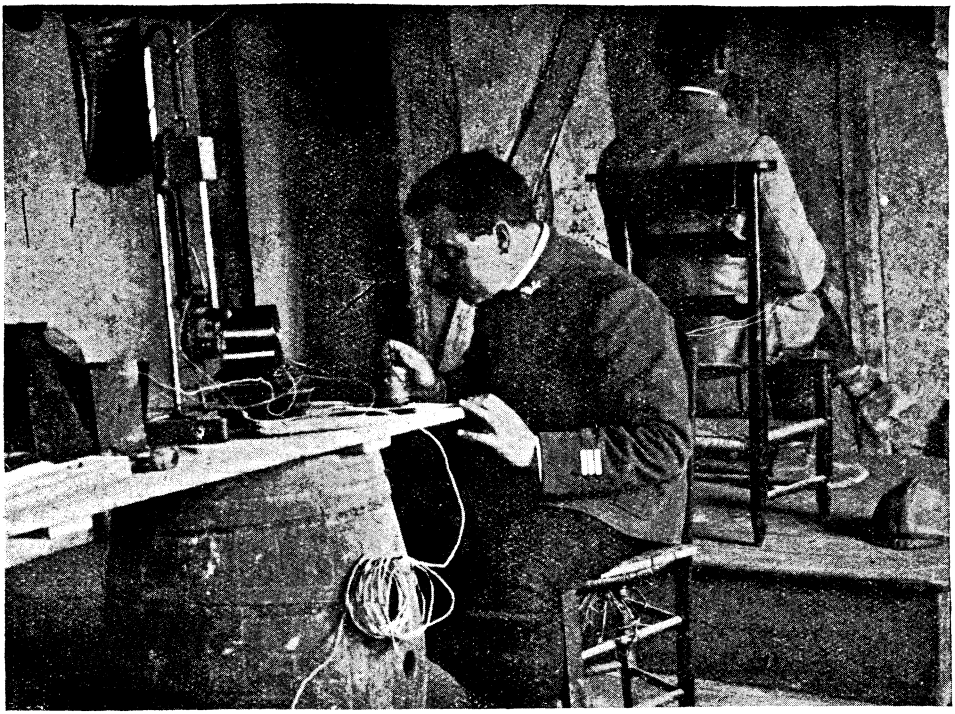
Professor Lahy began by analysing the movements of these two men, so as to discover the psycho-physiological elements characterising them. The gunner sits upon a low seat attached to his weapon, with his body slightly bent forward, his eye at the sight, his hands on the trigger and controls. This process of aiming calls for muscular rigidity, which the scientist translates into terms of "functional adaptation." The act of firing begins by pressure on the trigger, and ceases by its release. These two simple operations demand what psychologists know as "motor rapidity," or ability to make action follow stimulus with a minimum delay, and "absence of motor suggestivity," or ability to resist the impulse to duplicate the movements which he sees others make, or which are suggested to his brain through some other avenue of sense. Control of firing attitude, effected by the left hand on a wheel, of the lateral direction of fire, effected by lateral movements of the breech with the right hand, and of the firing speed,

regulated by rapid turning of the barrel, as well as reliability in passing from fixed to fan fire, which necessitates moving a lever with the right hand, are all of great importance. They involve motor rapidity, precision in little movements, dissociation of movements, and rapidity of decision.

As to the feeder, the demands upon him are equally exacting, though his movements may be less complex than those of his companion. He must place each clip in exactly the right position; each insertion must be timed accurately, to avoid jamming the gun; in short, there must be absolute regularity and precision in his movements.

Motor rapidity is the most important of all the attributes of a machine-gunner. The gunner must on no account hang fire; the feeder must never fail to complete his cycle in two and a half seconds.

In testing this attribute, Professor Lahy, to whose communications to the Paris Academy of Sciences I am largely indebted, employs a newly designed and electrically operated chronoscope. The hand of this apparatus, like that of the D'Arsonval chronograph, revolves round a dial divided into a hundred spaces. The hub is an electro magnet, and a second magnet is set in the back of the instrument. When the current passes through both magnets, the hand is motionless; when the circuit carrying the second magnet is broken, the hand rotates at a known speed. An electrically operated tuning-fork, giving fifty double vibrations per second, is furnished with an interrupter, so that at each oscillatory movement a current of very brief duration passes into the magnet and checks the hand in its rotation.



PROFESSOR LAHY REGISTERING WITH HIS CHRONOSCOPE A MACHINE-GUNNER'S PSYCHOMOTOR REACTIONS.

When measuring the time of auditory reactions, the Professor closes the tuning-fork circuit in the traditional manner by striking a hammer blow. In addition to its electrical effect, this blow is also the signal to the man who is being tested—and who, of course, is blindfolded—to reopen the circuit by means of a switch held in his hand. The length of time he takes to do this is measurable in terms of retardation of the clock hand.

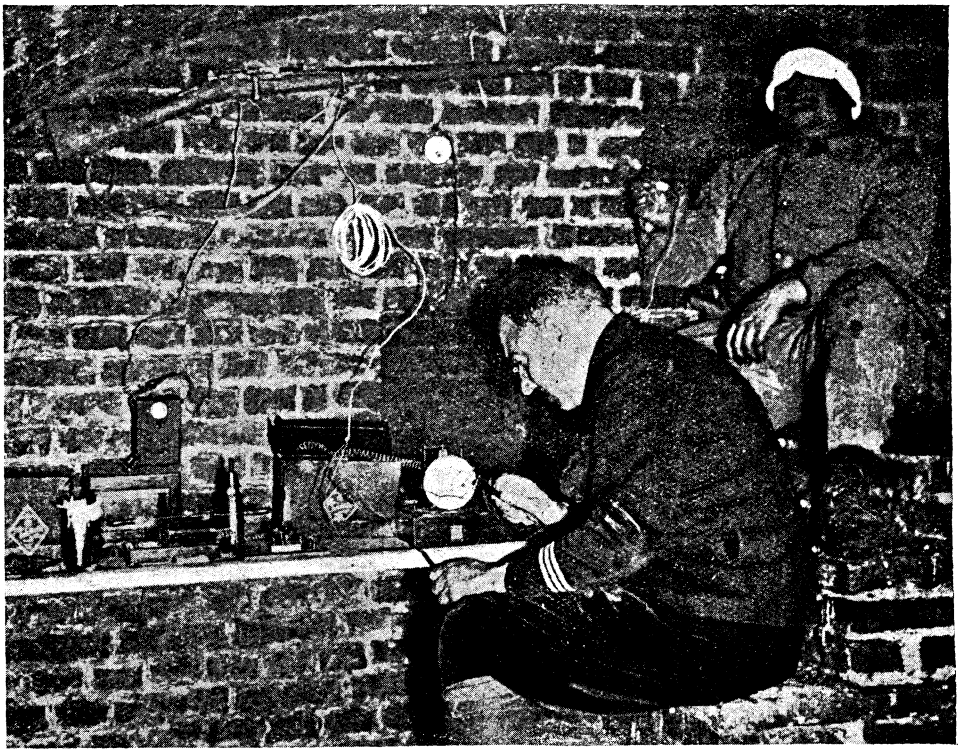
Visual reactions are timed by a somewhat different apparatus, involving a device for accompanying the making of

the circuit with a flashlight signal to the subject.

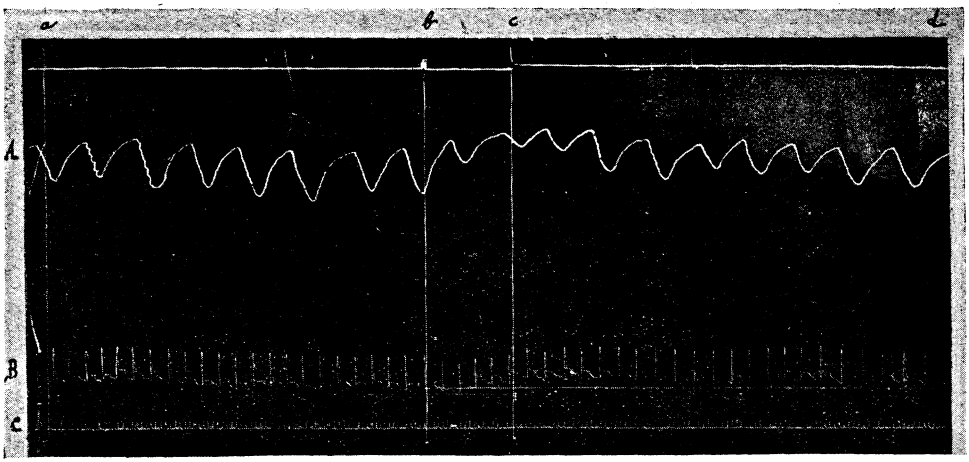
As a result of these experiments, it would appear that these gunners, accustomed to war conditions by eighteen months in a sector of great activity, possess motor speeds far beyond the normal. There is, indeed, a very notable difference between Professor Lahy's figures and those obtained by Camus and Nepper in their tests applied to prospective airmen at the Grand Palais, in Paris; nor do they accord with the classical averages previously established by Professor Charles Richet. The question is, however, whether the two series of experiments are comparable. Has the future aviator really the same nerve as a fighter who has been through eighteen months' uninterrupted fighting in the trenches? Does an "Ace" possess physiological characteristics identical with those of a first-rate gunner? It may be, of course, that in the cellar where Professor Lahy experimented, the conditions for accurate research were slightly defective. However that may be, the general conclusions of his researches should be carefully noted—namely, that in the case of good machine-gunners visual and auditory reactions are of great brevity. Thus out of one squad of twenty men examined, the thirteen best gunners showed an average visual reaction interval of only ·144 second, and an average auditory reaction interval of ·1157 second. In the case of the seven poorest men, the figures were respectively ·2142 and ·1884 second. The general average for all the twenty was ·1686 and ·1518 second. The classical averages are ·195 and ·15 second respectively.

Continuing his inquiries, the psychophysiologist set to work to study the rapidity of repetition of a given movement. The movement selected was a light blow upon a copper plate with a small stiletto. Contact between stiletto and plate established the circuit and marked upon a smoked cylinder each blow given.

"In this way," explains Professor Lahy, "not only the actual number of blows in an entire interval is recorded, but an index of fatigability is obtained by comparing the rates at which the stiletto fell during the beginning and during the end of the test. Given, then, identical indices of fatigue, the



RECORDING THE TIME OF AUDITORY REACTION OF A BLINDFOLDED MACHINE-GUNNER.



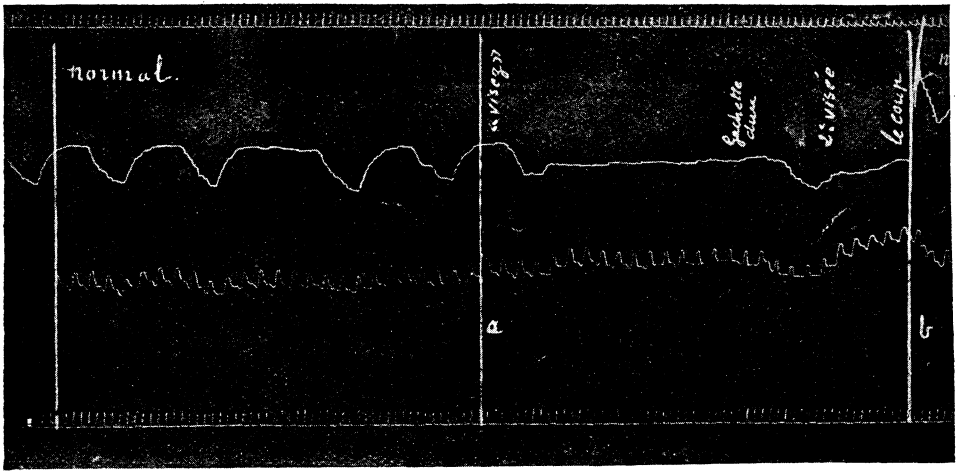
VARIATIONS IN THE RESPIRATION AND THE PULSE OF A FINE GUNNER DURING THE ACT OF FIRING.

A—respiration. B—pulse. C—time in one-fifth second. From a to b—normal curves; b—beginning to aim; c—the shot; from c to d—return to the normal.

best feeder of a machine-gun is the man with the greater motor speed."

On the other hand, when studying the motor suggestivity of machine-gunners by means of the standard Binet apparatus, the experimenter found that the better men reproduced not only the starts and stops of movement communicated by him, but even the slightest variations of speed; while the poorer "coffee-grinders," as mediocre gunners are styled by the *poilus*, are distinguished by a sort of motor hallucination, believing that they have felt impulses which were not given to their hand at all.

In searching for the physiological signs which characterise coolness under fire, Lahy had recourse to the notion of *functional plasticity*, which had previously enabled him to discover the meaning of profound organic modifications in voluntary and brief efforts of the attention. Self-mastery implies, indeed, perfect mental lucidity, a reasoned co-ordination of movements notwithstanding perturbing influences. In the midst of the hottest fight a good gunner must, above all, lean his head to the left in order to make sure of the point whence the bullets are coming, and rectify his aim; his muscles must obey the directions given by his brain when moving the wheel and the butt-end of the gun, without any emotion



HOW THE RESPIRATION (TOP CURVE) AND THE PULSE (BOTTOM CURVE) OF A FINE GUNNER RESPOND TO THE DEMANDS OF ACTION.

The interval from a to b is that of extreme effort. On this graph the phenomenon of "functional plasticity" is very clearly shown; it records a stoppage of the respiration, a rise in the blood pressure, and an increase in the number of pulsations. At the moment of firing, the subject, realising the resistance of the trigger, takes a second aim.

misdirecting his thoughts or interfering with his motor ability.

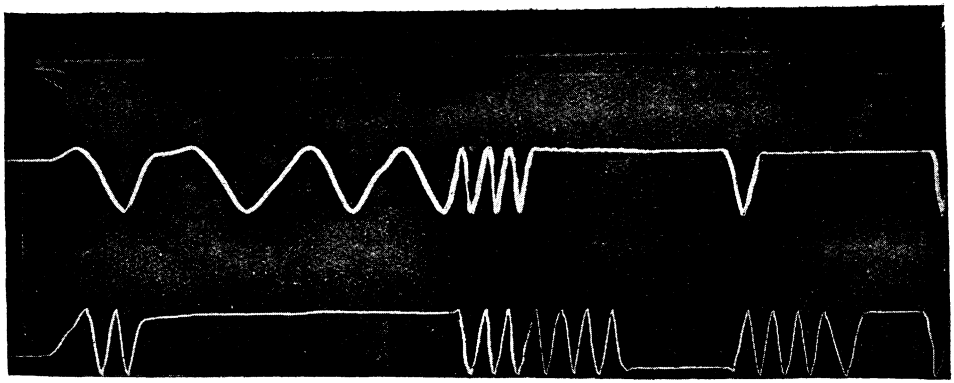
So Professor Lahy set to work to register the variations of pulse and respiration of a subject engaged in a brief act, but one demanding a considerable effort of attention. Firing a rifle is a fair example of such an act, and one which the experimenter employed, among others. Respiration and pulse are recorded by a needle on a smoked cylinder, and the graph obtained permits clear classification.

"Good subjects," says our psycho-physiologist, "adapt their organism spontaneously, either by arresting completely the respiration, or by modifying it noticeably. When a normal respiration would be in their way, in other words, they put it out of their way by breathing in such abnormal fashion as meets the needs of the situation. Their hearts and lungs are never 'in their throats.'"

Moreover, among the good men the blood pressure curve maintains itself horizontally before the experiment, or, at most, slightly and rhythmically undulatory, and shows a prompt rise at the beginning of the test. The ascension increases until the discharge of the gun marks the end of the voluntary effort, and then falls progressively. The rapidity of the return to normal again indicates great functional plasticity, this time on the part of the heart. On the other hand, excitable subjects present curves of great irregularity. Further, among the good men the pulse increases during action, whereas among the poorer ones it remains fixed or even falls—that is, their organisms are not responsive to the necessities of action.

In brief, the scientific conclusions to which this French professor has come agree in every way with the testimony of officers who have observed their gunners in action. On the battle-field the bravery of machine-gunners is of less importance than the precision and rapidity with which they use their terrible weapons. Functional plasticity furnishes, therefore, the most precious psycho-physiological indication as regards prospective gunners, since, by determining the degree of their coolness, it supplies the sign of their moral value during the fight.

Professor Lahy in his cellar at the Front, calmly proceeding with his investigations, despite the roar of the guns and the bursting of shells in close proximity to his laboratory, is a symbol. He represents French science and that devotion to its teachings which, in innumerable fields of research, is a guarantee of the victory that is to come.



MOTOR SUGGESTIVITY CURVE (BELOW) OF AN INFERIOR GUNNER WHO WAS TRYING TO REPEAT THE MOTIONS RECORDED ABOVE.

CONSTABLE CHACE'S CHANCE

By AUSTIN PHILIPS

Illustrated by Dudley Tennant

WANTED

FOR breaking into churches and stealing Communion plate and robbing poor-boxes, John Alfred Simmonds, formerly a schoolmaster, and native of Helston, age sixty, strongly built, height six feet two inches; when last seen was wearing breeches and shabby shooting-coat; black hair, broad face, sallow complexion, brown eyes; has superior appearance and manners; has slight stammer; is believed to be hiding in deserted mine-shafts or quarries. Five pounds reward will be paid to any person furnishing information which will lead to apprehension of this man.

GERALD DOWNING,
Chief Constable.

POLICE-CONSTABLE CHACE re-read the above notice very carefully, copied it, as an extra special precaution, into his note-book, left the parlour, where he did his correspondence and wrote reports up, and opened the kitchen door.

"I am going out, Mary," he said. "Give me a pasty. I may not be back for some time."

His wife nodded. She was a gentle little brown-eyed, oval-faced Celt of a woman, the mother of four children, who would shortly be home from school. They were much of an age, and their futures were a matter of great anxiety to their father, who had been pushed into the police by his parents, and wished to do better for his own.

Mrs. Chace wrapped up in a piece of soft paper one of those standing dishes which the Cornish seem to have invented, and which—made up of beef, pie-crust, potato, and turnip—are so delicious, and so handy to slip into a pocket when going out for the day.

"What time will you be in?" she asked, as her husband left the kitchen.

"I don't know—it's duty. I really can't say."

He went out immediately, striding against the gale.

There was snow on the ground. The North Cornwall winters are not Riviera-like at any time; but snow is uncommon, and Chace, as a Celt, found it strange. It was about half-past three. He left the church town and began to walk towards the sea, which was more than two miles away. Or, rather, he walked towards the estuary of the Dromedary River, with its terrible doom bar, across which lay the small fishing town of Lerryn, the terminus of a famous line.

He reached the golf links. The snow lay virgin on them and on the hills and headlands of either side of the estuary, and the calm water between them was the cold green colour of an Alpine sports ice-rink, chopped by occasional white waves. On the links was a little church, not far from the estuary. It had once been buried in the sand. It had a toothpick of a spire, with a long streak of snow down one side of it—the side which faced the east. It was enclosed by a tiny churchyard, with a wall about four feet high round it, on which tamarisks grew.

There were no houses near. The golf links were deserted. It was a wind-swept and desolate place. There was only a service on Sunday afternoons. It was the kind of place that the robber of church plate would most certainly seek, if aware of its existence. Moreover, as Constable Chace knew, it possessed a chalice of great antiquity and worth. What Constable Chace did *not* know was that the chalice was not in the vestry,

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but in the strong-box of the vicarage in St. Brenda's village, hard by St. Brenda's Church.

The robberies of church plate had been intermittent. The malefactor—only recently identified—had managed to hide himself. Cornwall is a large county, and there are lonely spaces on its moors.

Constable Chace had watched St. Tregenna's Church doggedly, both in day-time and night-time. To him it seemed that the thief *must* come there; it was such a tempting place. The gates of the little path which led up to the southern, and main, entrance were locked. Constable Chace glanced at them — their fastenings were very rickety—and then tramped round to the north. There he groped in the wall with his stick till he found a crevice, thrust his foot into it, caught hold of a tamarisk branch, lifted himself into the churchyard, and went through the snow to the porch. It had wooden benches. He sat down on the one which gave him the greater view of the country, turned up his coat collar, and, sheltered from the wind, while keeping observation, surrendered himself to his thoughts.

They were not over-happy ones. Chace was a disappointed man. He had entered the police late. He had done his duty very thoroughly, but had had few opportunities. He was highly intelligent—for his position—fond of his wife and children, deeply eager to do his best by his own. He was the type of man who would make a good inspector. But it was necessary to be made a sergeant first; and if a man does not emerge from the ruck before he is five-and-thirty, he usually remains a constable all his days. Fate had placed him in this remote village, with no scope for his latent abilities. Being full of zeal and anxious to distinguish himself, he had made himself a nuisance to everybody. But no real opportunity had ever come his way.

He sat on sadly, with his hands in his pockets and his coat collar covering his ears. His eyes looked ever westward. For long there was nothing to see.

Then suddenly he gave a little start. A figure was coming over the dunes beside the estuary where it narrowed—now visible, now disappearing, but coming steadily nearer and more near. Constable Chace took his hands out of his pockets, and his heart began to beat fast.

The man was big. He had a slouch hat on. He was carrying a heavy stick. He wore breeches. He seemed to be wearing a shooting-coat, of which the pockets bulged.

And clearly he was coming towards the church.

Chace rose, bent low, slipped out of the porch, and, still stooping, reached a large tombstone, from behind which he could maintain a clear view of all that happened in—and out—of the churchyard.

And he saw the man draw near.

It was, he felt certain, the subject of the police notice. The stranger was tall, bulky, unwieldy, and had a dark moustache. He was wearing, doubtless, the old clothes of someone of the better class.

He reached the gates. Chace saw him turn the handle, which failed to release them. There was a moment of hesitation. Then two immense hands caught hold of the iron frameworks. An enormous foot rested at their base. There was a tug, a wrench, a push, and the gates parted. They swung open into the churchyard.

The man seemed to smile grimly. He walked past the gates, closed them, and strode up towards the porch. Sacrilege and desecration were imminent, yet a veritable Te Deum was ringing in Chace's glad heart. He watched the man into the porch, and lost sight of him, and waited, to give him full opportunity of falling right into the trap.

For the church doors were locked!

He allowed three minutes to pass. Then he tiptoed forward. The burglar was working at the lock. Joy of joys, he had an instrument in his hand! Constable Chace crept close.

The man heard him. He turned round, and was clearly startled, for the instrument clattered on the stone.

Chace jumped forward and set foot on it. He caught hold of the malefactor's arm.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded.

"You were trying to get into the church."

"I k-know I was."

"I saw you burst the gates open."

"I k-know I d-did."

"You were trying to pick the lock."

"P-possibly, if you l-like to call it that."

"I shall have to take you into custody. You'd better come along quiet, and not make any fuss."

The stranger considered Chace carefully—as it might be measuringly. He was huge, but he was at least sixty, and Chace was a splendid animal, and only thirty-five.

"You d-dashed fool!" he stammered. "I'm not a thief!"

"Then what are you?"

"I'm an . . ."

There was an immense effort at articulation, which culminated in the word "architect." Constable Chace gave a laugh.

"Architect!" he said scornfully. "And what may be your name?"

"Jones."

"Jones, is it? What were you doing if you weren't going to rob the church?"

"I was going in on business. I've just crossed the ferry—from a piece of work at St. Miriam's—and I wanted to look in here. I sent an articled clerk some weeks ago, but it was a chance to see things for myself."

"Yes, it looks like it, doesn't it? Can you prove who you are?"

The stranger hesitated. He considered Chace carefully. His eyes—grey-blue eyes, the only way in which he at all differed from the printed description—became curiously keen and hard.

"I'm not sure," he said; "I'll look and see."

He fumbled in his pockets. He produced no documents. But out of one of them came a note-book containing some cabalistic-looking figures, and from another some silver, a measuring tape, and a little case of black leather containing a diamond for cutting glass. From a pocket of the old shooting-coat came, wrapped in tissue-paper, a large piece of yellow wax.

Chace knew the thrill of success.

The diamond was for cutting a window. The wax was for pressing against the glass, to prevent it crashing inwards when cut. The coins were thefts from poor-boxes. The tape—he did not quite know.

"So there's no document," he said sternly. "Your story won't hold water. You'll have to come along!"

"All right. I really don't m-mind."

The man's voice was so careless, and his eyes so wicked, that Chace grew suspicious of a ruse. He formed two resolutions instantly. The first was to make him walk two paces ahead to St. Brenda's, and the second was to handcuff him thence to Wadeforde. It was getting late. The night would be moonless; only the snow would give light.

"Just go ahead of me!" he ordered. "Down the path!"

The other obeyed. Chace picked up the lock-pickers—which resembled a large pair of compasses—followed, and gave instructions from time to time. The malefactor was compelled to lead the way, over stiles and through gates, going always in the direction of St. Brenda's church-town.

Chace followed buoyantly. His heart was joyful; his step was light as a boy's. This was his hour. It atoned for years of waiting. He had compassed a real coup. His captive—in clothes, height, stammer—in every detail, corresponded with the notice issued by the Chief Constable and hanging on the wall at his home. There was, though, one trifling discrepancy: the eyes were blue-grey, not dark. But that was doubtless due to an error on the part of some person who had first described him to the police.

They drew close to the village. The malefactor stopped.

"I should like to see the vicar," he said. "He will know who I am."

"The vicar is away," said Chace shortly. "It's no use going there." He spoke truthfully. An invalid wife and the north-east winds had impelled the incumbent to Torquay.

They reached the village. The constable's cottage contained no cell, but he put the prisoner temporarily in his best room. He half closed the door, kept an eye on it, put his head into the kitchen, and called to Mrs. Chace.

"I have got the church plate thief," he said. "He's in the other room."

"Charlie! How splendid! How did you manage it? It ought to do you good."

"It will—I shall get my promotion. I shall be an inspector yet!"

Mrs. Chace nodded breathlessly. Then curiosity conquered agitation, and she wanted to know much more.

"Is he dangerous? Charlie, what's he like?"

"Just like the description. Go and get the handcuffs; I don't like to leave the door."

She ran upstairs to the bedroom, where the handcuffs—rarely needed—were kept. She came down with them. Chace returned to the front room.

"Hold out your hands!" he said. "I am going to take you into Wadeforde, and I want to put these on."

"What?"

"Yes. I will take them off one wrist again, presently, but you must wear them while I make a full search."

The captive considered him, seemed to realise that protest was impossible, and held out both his hands. Chace fastened on the handcuffs and began to search him. He had not gone very far when he heard the crackle of paper in one of the pockets of the

shooting-coat into which his hand had dived. There was a hole in the lining. Between it and the cloth was an envelope. He gripped it and pulled it out. At that moment there came a loud and feminine cry.

He turned slightly. It was his wife, whose curiosity had impelled her to push open and peep through the door. She stood half in the room and half out of it, with amazement written on her face. "What's the matter?" he said. "Is anything wrong with the children?"

"No—only I know this gentleman. It's Mr. Trevannion Jones!"

"Trevannion Jones?"

"Yes, the architect from Truro. He used to come to the Archdeacon's when I was cook there. I know his face quite well!"

Chace stood thunderstruck. He recollected that the man had described himself as an architect, and had said his name was Jones; and he remembered the name as that of the restorer of many churches in the county, and of one reputed to be eccentric, and a famous antiquary, too.



"'Is anything wrong with the children?' 'No—only I know this gentleman. It's Mr. Trevannion Jones!'"

He turned from his wife to his prisoner, who addressed him without a smile.

"I told you the truth, constable. You were right to be suspicious, but I gave you my name and my profession, and explained my business with the church. I see you

have found a letter. You may read it, if you care."

It was addressed to Claude Trevannion Jones, Esq., at the post office of St. Miriam, whence the prisoner said he had come.

"My dear Claude (it ran), I am delighted to hear that you are coming to Bodmin. Send on your luggage in the morning, and then walk, as you suggest, to Wadeforde. The train leaves at six-thirty. I have got a fine piece of old carving to show you. I picked it up, not long ago, at a cottage on the moors.

"Yours ever,
"GERALD DOWNING."

Gerald Downing was the Chief Constable of the county. In Chace's agitation he left the handcuffs where they were.

"Oh, sir," he said piteously, "I beg your pardon! But I was only trying to do my duty—I was so anxious to catch the thief. Perhaps I was *over*-anxious. But your conduct was very suspicious—and I have four small children—and I want promotion for their sakes—and my wife's!"

Mrs. Chace supported his pleadings. The architect heard them. He was gentle to the woman; to the man he was distinctly stern. He left ten minutes later, relieved of his handcuffs, refusing tea, and restored to his property. Chace followed him into the high-road.

"Mr. Jones," he said imploringly, "I *beg* of you not to tell the Chief, sir! If you do, I shall be a ruined man!"

"I shall promise nothing, constable. Good day!"

The architect disappeared into the darkness. Two minutes later Mrs. Chace took her husband by the pleated breast-pockets of his coat.

"Oh, you fool! You fool!" she sobbed. "You'll be a constable all your life!"

* * * * *

A week afterwards, Constable Chace, who had spent seven days in purgatory, received a yellow envelope of the common official kind. The contents required his attendance at the Chief Constable's office at Bodmin, later on in the day. He cycled there. He was shown to the innermost room.

"Good morning, Chace!" said the dignitary.

"Good morning, sir!" the constable replied.

"The church thief has been caught in Penwith—the real thief this time, Chace!"

"Yes, sir."

The Chief Constable smiled to himself and considered his subordinate hard.

"That was an unfortunate error of yours," he resumed drily.

"Yes, sir."

"But a very reasonable one. Mr. Trevannion Jones thinks so himself. Now, how soon will you be ready to leave St. Brenda's?"

"Leave, sir?"

"Yes. There is a vacancy for a sergeant at Lostwithiel. I want you to go there at once!"

Chace saluted. Then—so great was his relief and consequent happiness—tears came into his eyes.

The Chief Constable opened a drawer. He took out a package and put it into Chace's hand.

"Oh, sergeant," he said, "Mr. Jones asked me to give this to you. You can open it when you get outside."

Chace saluted and left the presence. In the corridor, still trembling with relief and ever-growing happiness, he undid the paper and string. The contents disclosed themselves—a case containing two pipes.

In each bowl was a rolled-up document. Chace removed one of them and read—

"From the captured to the capturer, with every kind of good will."

He removed the other piece also. It was a bank-note for five pounds.

Pinned to it was a scrap of paper on which was scribbled this—

"To Mrs. Chace, in remembrance of her 'most excellent' dinners and her still 'more excellent' memory—from Claude Trevannion Jones."

FRATTAN'S FARM

By ANNE SCOTT

Illustrated by Wal Paget

MADGE trotted briskly along the white road that lay like a ribbon between the pine wood and the river. Sheathford Market was far behind, and she knew she was only carrying a load of empty baskets besides her mistress. Not even the usual flick of the reins was needed to urge her up the hill leading to the grey stone homestead at the top.

Business had been brisk; it generally was in days when eggs were more than ever eggs, and real golden farm butter, made by the capable hands of Mrs. Frattan, a treat with a capital T. And so she had decided that the time had come for the purchase of the substantial silk gown that would show off her robust charms to the best advantage; and lying snugly amongst divers other brown paper-clad parcels was *the* one for which she had been "putting by" for months. The silk had been bought at the best draper's in Sheathford, and displayed, over a cup of tea in "Batty's," to several of her intimates whom she only met on market days. Not for worlds would she have shown it to Miss Shipman, at the village post office, or to the ladies of the neighbouring farms. The new gown, with a bonnet crown-laden with nodding roses, was to burst upon their vision at the chapel anniversary three weeks later. And, to make assurance doubly sure that the silk would be made up in the latest of modes as purveyed by a well-known authority on dressmaking, a copy of that journal was carefully tucked into the string of the brown paper parcel.

And things were going well in other directions. The day before an old gentleman had taken her best bed and sitting-room for three months, and without inviting her terms —always pitched high, to allow of the usual "bridging" down by the "visitors" from Sheathford—he had handed her a substantial cheque for a month in advance, waved his hand to stop her voluble thanks, and driven off in the wagonette by which he came from Bridgeinn Station.

"Hullo, missus, thoos back early," Amos Brammer, the general handyman, remarked, as he helped Mrs. Frattan out of the trap.

"Aye, Amos, there's a sight o' folks i' Sheathford, an' I was glad to get oot, an' Madge likewise," she added, patting the pony's back. Madge waved her long tail in response, to indicate that she quite understood, and had done her best to hurry home.

"I'll hev to hev t' lass all to-morrow, Amos, to clean t' walls and wash paintin's. We'll need to keep up t' mark, A'm thinkin', to please that owd chap—I can see he's mighty perteecler. But he's free wi' his brass, an' that's summat."

"'Tis the main thing," Amos agreed. "I'll tell t' lass to come across first thing in the morning," he added, as he led the pony to the stables, and Mrs. Frattan disappeared indoors, carrying her parcels.

A young girl sprang up from the rocking-chair to take them. The "living" kitchen faced the west, and the sun, now nearing the rocky ridge on the other side of the valley, turned her brown hair to gold, and danced and sparkled on the candlesticks and other "brasses." A square of oilcloth—with a surround of flags decorated with whorls and hieroglyphics in sandstone—made the floor covering, flanked with a "clipping" mat, bearing the legend of "Home, Sweet Home," in bright crimson, on the hearth. A little wood fire crackled cheerily, and in front of it a kettle sang its welcome.

"I've hed tea, thank ye; nowt until supper-time, lass. 'Tis war-time, an' we mun be sparin'," Mrs. Frattan added, as she hung up her coat and on top of it the bonnet, decorated with a single upstanding and

weather-worn plume, also dedicated to market days.

"There, now, love, what dost tha think on't?" Mrs. Frattan inquired, proudly displaying the silk of royal purple.

Molly rose to the occasion bravely. "It's gorgeous; there won't be another like it at the sermons."

"No!"—triumphantly. "I think Aa done Miss Shipman this time. She's hevin' her velveteen dyed, an' that's naught to compare wi' bran'-new silk." Then: "Hest had onybody, lass?"

Molly flushed like a rose.

"Just two o' the lads from Moorshaw. They had glasses of milk and sat in the garden a bit for a rest."

"Aye," her step-mother remarked drily. "The same two, I'll warrant—the little 'un that comes frae Bardwell way, an' the big 'un frae Canada. It seems to me, lass, that they like our milk better than t'other foaks'."

Molly laughed. "It's a change for them to come out here, an' 'tis a rest."

"'Specially when there's a smart-lookin' lass t' talk wi'," Mrs. Frattan remarked. "Weel, weel, they's hed a hard time oot at that there Front, and they wants a bit o' pleasuring. Only——"

"Only what, mother?"

"I canna bide Bardwell foak, an' I wadn't like you to wed a lad frae sic a plaace."

Molly laughed. "Tom Greenup's going to be married when he gets his leave. He showed me her photo—a rare smart lass. She's in Coney's—up High Street."

"A dressed-up doll, I'll warrant," Mrs. Frattan said contemptuously. Inwardly she heaved a sigh of relief at the news. "It's nowt to do wi' us, and like as not the lad will be killed afore War's over, an' then where'll the poor thing be? It's sad times for lads and lassies, an' mothers maist of aal."

She sighed again as she wrapped up the silk, and would have liked to know that the handsome Canadian was also "tokened." Mrs. Frattan had other designs for her step-daughter. Just across the bridge, at the foot of the hill that Madge had carried her up so briskly, stood an aggressive stone house, of no particular architecture, built by a prosperous Sheathford cutler. And he was also fond of calling at the farm on the hill-top on some pretext or other.

II.

By six next morning, far above the sounds of crowing cocks and clucking hens, could be heard the regular rhythm of Molly's carpet beater alternating with that of old Amos's "lass." The "Brussels" of the parlour lay prone on the square of grass which pretentious folk would have described as the lawn, and every inch was "gone over" until not a speck of dust remained.

Then the haircloth chair seats shared the same fate, temporarily detached from their frames of mahogany, also the big sofa with its bolsters at each end. Mrs. Frattan derided all "aids" in the way of cleaners, describing the users thereof as "slatterin' foak."

Later she stood in the doorway of the best parlour, surveying results, her expression that of a triumphant general. Only the "mashing" of the tea wanted doing when the sound of wheels heralded the guest's approach.

Satisfied that all was correct, she ascended the stairs, newly covered with spotless druggeting, leading to the bedroom above, which had also been "turned out" in the same whole-hearted fashion as the room below. Curtains of dazzling whiteness at the windows contrasted with the rose-splashed wall-paper, and on the four-poster lay *the* quilt, the triumph of Mrs. Frattan's youth, which had held the place of honour in her "bottom drawer" until she became the second wife of Isaac Frattan. It was of scraps of silk of microscopic size, all carefully fitted and joined with stitches invisible to the naked eye, and making a kaleidoscopic blaze of colour which put the proverbial coat of Joseph quite in the shade.

She crossed the room to the washstand. Both ewers were filled to the brim, and the whitest of towels hung on the rail; but the soap-box——

"Molly," she cried sharply from the head of the stairs, "nip on your hat and run to Miss Shipman's for a cake o' the best toilet. 'Twas a mercy I came up. That's what comes o' trustin' a feather-headed lass! Him'll be 'ere in a minit, and naught but 'pale' in t' 'ouse!"

Mrs. Frattan felt that her reputation as "the perfect landlady" was at stake.

Molly ran, after "nipping" her sun-bonnet from the peg, and before she reached the village a few stray curls were disarranged. But she looked all the prettier—at least, so thought the big Canadian soldier who had just limpingly turned the corner from the other side of the Stores. She almost fell against him in her haste, and he dropped his stick. Molly, her blushes rising,

picked it up and handed it to him, and the next minute two heads were bent over Miss Shipman's local views, while that lady slowly wrapped up the "best toilet," keeping her eyes and ears open the while, and trying to "butt in" with a leading question or two regarding the coming visitor.

But Molly shook her head. No, she had not heard her step-mother say the gentleman's name. He was coming from Chinley way.

"Manchester, I'll lay," Miss Shipman diagnosed, and inwardly decided on an advertisement in *The Sheathford Telegraph*. To confess to unlet rooms while her rival's were booked for months was unthinkable.

Molly forgot her step-mother's injunction to hurry back, for Kennet Motcombe limped slowly beside her, and more than once their eyes met. She sprang lightly to the top of the stile, and, as a matter of course, helped him up the clumsy stone steps. It took a long time, and somehow her hand was still in his possession after both had safely landed on the other side. Then his arm stole round the girl's waist, and she was listening, with her head on his breast, to the oldest story in the world. She felt his kisses on her hair and cheeks and, growing bolder, on her lips, and forgot everything in her first experience of love's young dream.



"A deprecating cough brought the lovers back to earth."

A deprecating cough brought the lovers back to earth. On the top of the stile stood her step-mother's prospective guest!

Molly Frattan tore herself free and, without looking behind, ran all the way to the farm, not even pausing to breast the hill.

And, worst of all, she had dropped the "best toilet" in her haste, and was listening to a lecture on her carelessness, when the click of the gate stopped the fluent tongue of Mrs. Frattan. The guest came up the flagged path, bearing a small parcel wrapped in newspaper. He greeted Mrs. Frattan, and, with a courtly bow and a twinkle in his eye, turned to Molly.

"This is yours, I think," he said.

Covered with confusion, Molly disappeared to "mash" the tea, while Mr. Hollins was conducted upstairs by his hostess, the latter surreptitiously placing the soap in its place as she listened to her guest's admiration of the view.

III.

"WHEN a man maks oop's mind, the suner it's doon t' better." Thus Mr. Baddeley, as he stood at the window of "the den," the only apartment in Hollis Court he had managed to make all his own and immune from the invasion of the house decorator and his passion for "periods." It contained a heterogeneous collection of oddments from his Sheathford residence, including the rocker he had presented to his wife on the first anniversary of their wedding day. And above it hung an "enlargement" of a rubicund lady in blue silk, with a pearl necklace and two gold chains shimmering on her ample bosom.

Mr. Baddeley turned from the contemplation of the chimneys of Frattan's Farm and looked earnestly at the portrait.

"Thoo wadn't mind, Emma; I'se lonely all b' mysen. Thoo allus wanted me t' be coomfortable, an' that 'un in theer?"—indicating the door that led into the drawing-room, where at that moment his lady housekeeper sat in state, doing crochet work—"she means t' hev me if——"

Again he looked out of the window. "Now, she's a' right 'un, an' wain't expect a man to be always on's p's and q's."

Miss Merrivale watched her employer stepping briskly down the gravelled drive, and noticed that he was wearing his new suit, a light grey tweed fresh from the hands of the best tailor in Sheathford. She was the fifth cousin of a canon, and her recommendations were "high." At present her mission in life was to initiate the retired cutler into the habits of the "good society" she had quitted so recently, and then, perhaps—after due supplication on his part—to bestow gracefully her hand upon him. But her efforts were not prospering. Mr. Baddeley did not submit with a good grace to be "missioned," and she was beginning to feel less hopeful about his reformation and the results to come after. So Miss Merrivale compressed her thin lips more tightly as she watched him climb the white road.

Mr. Baddeley walked quickly. He admitted to himself that he was a bit "nervy," although his heart exhibited none of the disturbing signs he so well remembered in his first courting days, twenty odd years ago.

"Us can only be young once," he sighed, conscious of a twinge or two in his gouty leg as he breasted the hill.

The latch seemed to click with terrific loudness, and his mild knock at the kitchen door echoed through the long passage behind it. A moment's silence, and then the mistress of the house appeared.

Mr. Baddeley threw away the end of his cigar and put on his best smile.

"Coom in, coom in, Mr. Baddeley; I'se setten' aal b' mysen. The gentleman what came at Friday is hevin' some wounded soldiers t' tea, an' Molly, she's playin' piano t' them. But she'll be here shortly—they hev to be t' 'orspital be six."

The strains of "Robin Adair" in a manly tenor voice sounded in Mr. Baddeley's ears as he sat down in the chair once sacred to the late Mr. Frattan. He mopped his forehead.

"It's stiff wark a-climbing that there 'ill," he remarked.

"Coom an' sit by winder, then, Mr. Baddeley, if so be you feels heat soa much."

"No, thank ye. I like a bit o' fire o' nights, an' that duchess at my 'ouse, she wain't heer tell o' one 'cept in t' kitchen——says it makes doost."

"Bain't you t' mester?" Mrs. Frattan inquired.

"I ain't, that's truth, missus, an' so"—very slowly and in an impressive tone—"I'm thinkin' on makin' a change."

"There's Frattan's sister—her 'at's been wi' Parson at Tweenwell. He's getting wed——"

"An' so I am mysen—that's if so be t' lady'll hev me," Mr. Baddeley blurted out, again mopping his forehead.

"Well, now, if he isn't t' gentleman all through, axin' me first afore he says owt to our Molly," Mrs. Frattan said to herself. Aloud she remarked: "Aye, I dessay you feels lonesome at times, just like mysen, an' a bright young thing like Molly——"

Mr. Baddeley stared. "Molly! A dinnet want Molly; it's Molly's mother I'm axin' for," he said boldly. And, forgetting all his good resolutions to proceed with caution and perfect correctness, as became the years of both, his arm slipped automatically round Mrs. Frattan's waist, and with the air of a desperado he gave her a resounding kiss full on the lips.

Then Mrs. Frattan declared that if she "'adn't been struck all on a heap, she'd have smacked his face, and dared him to do sec like again," which he promptly did.

Sounds of heavy boots coming along the passage caused the lovers to fly apart, Mrs. Frattan hurriedly adjusting her lace cap—feeling inwardly glad that it was her best one—by the mantelpiece mirror, and Mr. Baddeley professing great interest in the tortoiseshell tabby, which had been languidly watching the recent proceedings with one eye shut.

"Mother—— Oh, Mr. Baddeley, I didn't know you were here!"

Molly stood in the doorway, a slim figure in a white linen frock, and behind her the big Canadian and little Tom Greenup.

The former stepped forward. "We've come to say good-night, Mrs. Frattan. You and Mr. Hollins have given us no end of a good time."

Mrs. Frattan beamed on both. "Very good on ye to think so, I'm sure," she said in her best hostess manner, "and, mind, there's always a glass o' milk when you likes t' call."

Then Mr. Baddeley, in the fulness of his heart, presented each with one of his very best Havanas.

Two hours later, when the boarder's supper-things were being washed, Mrs. Frattan confided her secret to her step-daughter.

Molly laughed. "It's naught so astonishing, after all; I guessed all along that it was you he came to see. Why, mother, that cap would fetch any man; an' when you get that fine silk gown——"

"Well, now, if t'isn't providential, me buying it o' market day; it'll make a rare wedding gown, an' no mistake."

Molly put her arms round her step-mother's neck.

"It'll be a double wedding, if you like. Mr. Hollins has found out that Kennet's father was own cousin to him, an' he's going to set him up in a big farm out yonder when the War's over."

"If that disn't beat all the novelettes 'at iver were writ. Thou shall hev a silk frock, too, Molly, my lass. My word, but we will put Miss Shipman in t' shade!"

And so they did; but Molly declined the silk gown, and stood at the altar like a slim white lily in simple muslin, with her tall bridegroom towering above her, and Mr. Hollins gave both brides away.

TO A FRIEND KILLED IN ACTION.

YOU were too young for death; you hardly knew
The sweet of April love or May regret:
Scarcely, I think, the virgin heart of you,
At touch of hands or lips, had quickened yet.

Brave dreams I dreamed for you of high romance,
Which decked you with a shining panoply,
And knightly-wise I saw you bear a lance
In golden days of pomp and chivalry.

One perfect bud of knighthood bloomed too late
In the dead summer's sickly aftermath,
And, flowering bravely, scornful of its fate,
Died proudly 'midst the foul weeds' whispering wrath.

Well, sleep, and dream that in some comelier land,
In shining samite whiter than the snows,
Came Galahad, and took you by the hand,
And called you "Brother knight," and kissed your brows.

A. M. BURRAGE.



PREPARING MOSES FOR THE FAIR: THE SCENE FROM GOLDSMITH'S "THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD." BY H. M. PAGET.

THE COUNSEL OF THE WISE

By SYDNEY DRIVER

Illustrated by Lucien Davis

"OH, yes, old chap, I understand all right. I've been bitten myself, in my time, and I'm not so very much older than you. It's because I understand that I ask you so seriously: Don't make this mistake—don't put work second just now."

Dick Rendall watched his line gently moving in the water a moment before replying.

"Yes, I know," he said finally. "But you don't know Syb—she isn't like other girls."

"Of course not." But there was no trace of mockery in Harry Travers's face or voice. "Of course, she's different, I know."

"And, you see, if I don't make the most of my chance just now, I shall lose her, perhaps. She's—— Hullo, there's one!"

The mackerel was hauled, protesting, from the Atlantic. For a few moments both were busily engaged, and it was Travers who continued the conversation.

"Don't you think, perhaps, that if you worked steadily with your purpose in front of you, she will think even more of you? It might pay all round, you know."

"Yes, there's that in it."

"Just think it over, old chap. I won't bother you, although I am your tutor. But remember the Balliol group comes off in November, and you certainly have a chance now. But there's a hot field this year, and you *must* work. Don't come down like Carden did. Other people wouldn't understand quite as well as I should, and I shall think more of you if you pull it off. Balliol is too good to throw away, and there's plenty of time for the other thing."

Very thoughtfully Rendall looked at Travers.

"You really think I shouldn't go to Brittany, then, this summer with them?"

"I do. It's hard, I know, but I really do. She'll think all the more of you if you stick to your guns. And, among other things, old chap, I chuck responsibility if you do."

"You mean you'll drop coaching me?"

"Yes."

"My guardian blackguarded me so much, when I told him about it, that he drove me into saying I would go. But—I don't want you to drop me, Mr. Travers."

"Good enough, old man. Let's see it through together, and we'll start by having a jolly good holiday this week-end. What about going over to Penzance together?"

"I'd love to."

For a little while Rendall fished in silence, while Travers watched him through thick clouds of tobacco-smoke.

"The old story," he thought. "Is there any older? Happened to me before 'Mods.' Happened to others as well, by Jove. It's elemental. . . . Think he'll come through all right now. Can't help feeling sorry for him."

A good deal more sorry, perhaps, than he would have felt for pretty little Sybil Phillimore, if he could have seen her when she received a certain letter two days afterwards, and watched her astonishment, even to vexation, as she read—

"Awfully sorry I really can't come to Brittany, although it's jolly good of your people to ask me. Travers says I must work. It'll be different at Christmas. I know you'll understand."

"I don't want him to come," she explained to her young satellite, Ruby Harding, an hour later. "I'm rather glad he isn't, as

he'd only spoil sport. It's just like that horrid Mr. Travers — it's just like his meanness to tell Dick he's got to work all the summer. But I'm really jolly glad he isn't coming. He'd only spout poetry if he did."

"He's rather nice, though," said Ruby tentatively.

"Do you think so? I don't. Ruby, *how* shall I do my hair when I put it up next week? I've been trying all the morning. I think I'll try the plain band, after all."

"That's how Dick likes it."

"Is it?"—with supreme indifference. "I don't know."

"I'd like to meet that Mr. Travers," Sybil said a little later, as she and Ruby strolled away from the tennis-court. "I'd tell him what I think of him."

A remark which, taken with the rest of Sybil Phillimore's conversation, made up in spirit what it lacked in logic.

* * * * *

"So you are *the* Mr. Travers, are you?" said Sybil Phillimore, and she stopped fanning herself and looked at him with a certain interest.

"The Travers of London or Australia—which do you mean?" Travers smiled.

"Oh, you know—Dick's tutor last year."

"I had that honour."

"Well, I must say you did him good. They say he got to Balliol simply through you, and he's doing awfully well there."

"So I believe. But the credit was his, not mine. He worked like a Trojan."

"You'd have to say that, of course. He says it's all you. Which is a poor girl to believe?"

"There you have me. What about the garden? It's cooler than the conservatory."

"I'm very glad you could come to-night, Mr. Travers. Dick said he thought you could, but he wasn't sure. Are you keen on dancing?"

"Very. I like all that sort of thing."

"I suppose you get a good deal of it?"

"Yes, a certain amount. Half our job in the Diplomatic Service is to do nothing prettily."

"Somehow I don't think you do that very well," said Sybil, as she looked at him.

"Am I to feel complimented?"

"You know what I mean—you wouldn't do nothing. And Dick says you work very hard really, and are rather important."

"Indeed?"

"Yes. He says Lord Broadmore thinks a lot of you."

"Lord Broadmore hasn't told me so; I must ask him."

"Don't be silly. He told father, too."

"Who? Dick?"

"No, Lord Broadmore. You really are absurd," laughed Sybil.

"We must have another dance, to straighten this out. It's so complicated now. But I suppose you haven't any to spare?"

"I—think so. I always keep one or two, by the initial dodge."

"Then may I have sixteen—unless Dick wants it?"

"I don't think he will. Elsie Greenway is here to-night."

"Who is she, might one inquire?"

"The prettiest girl in the room, so Dick told me a little while ago."

Travers looked at her in an enigmatic manner.

"Broadly speaking, Dick seems to be developing into a bit of a young liar, on the whole. Well, here is your next partner to claim you. *Au revoir.*"

"*Au revoir*, and thank you."

"Hope you enjoyed it, Mr. Travers?" said Dick, as they stood at the door a few hours afterwards.

"Very much, thanks. Miss Phillimore seems quite to have forgiven me."

"Of course she would when she met you. Besides, she's older. Isn't Elsie Greenway topping?"

"Yes." But Travers's smile was unmistakable.

"I suppose you think I'm an awful ass."

"My dear fellow, no. But aren't you glad you went to Balliol?"

"Yes, thanks to you."

"You haven't had a row with Miss Phillimore, have you, Dick?"

"Oh, dear, no—we're jolly good friends. She's a good sort, but she's getting so serious and different, somehow."

"Growing up, perhaps."

"Perhaps. Hullo, there's Elsie! Well, good-bye, old chap."

Travers stood alone. He watched a doll-like figure mince its way down the steps, closely attended by Dick Rendall, lit a cigarette, and smiled a little.

"I'm not *sure*," he said to himself, "that eighteen wasn't wiser than twenty—in a way. But they're both young enough, Heaven knows. . . . Let's see, when did she say?" He looked at his programme. "Monday week. Must keep that open. I've seen it before, but that doesn't matter. I wonder if I can find that group with Dick and



"Had to grope for it under the seat."

myself in? Funny she hasn't seen it already. I must have a look."

The cynic might have smiled.

* * * * *

"The pater tells me they've offered you that job under Sir John Doverfield in Japan," said Rendall, as he sat, two years later, in Travers's room, comfortably ensconced in an arm-chair, with a whisky and soda by his side. "You're a lucky dog. Pater says it's the making of anybody to get a job like that. I suppose you're jolly glad?"

"Yes, I am"—a little slowly.

"When do you start?"

"Pretty soon, if I go; but fact is, you know, I've not quite decided whether to take it."

"Surely you're going to?" Somehow, this remark of Travers's did not come as a complete surprise to Rendall, but it worried him, nevertheless. "Wouldn't it be a great mistake not to?"

"Depends rather on what you call a mistake. For some reasons I want to go, for others I don't, and it depends which reasons are more important. I was only offered the job yesterday, you know, and it wants a little thinking out."

Rendall thought a moment and decided to take the plunge. After all, he was nearly a man in years himself, and he had certainly known Travers long enough to be able to claim a reasonable degree of friendship with him. In any case, he couldn't do any harm.

"Travers, I don't mean to be rude or inquisitive, or anything like that—but—are the reasons against anything to do with Sybil Phillimore?"

Travers looked at him and smiled.

"I knew you were going to ask that. What makes you think it?"

"Many things. I don't suppose there's been a week in the last eighteen months—certainly not a month—when you haven't seen her. You've done theatres and dances and all sorts of things together, and then your holidays at the same place as her people this summer—it's been perfectly obvious, old chap."

"Well?"

"Well, I thought perhaps it had something to do with your hesitating. I'm awfully sorry, old chap, you know—I don't want to annoy you."

"My dear fellow, you aren't a bit—far from it. But what if it has?"

"Only—it's extraordinary for me to be saying this to you, after what happened before—but do you know her—well enough for all this?"

"I think I know her pretty well," Travers answered, with a quiet smile.

"Yes, I know you've been about a lot with her, and all that," said Rendall, "but that isn't exactly what I mean. It's awfully hard to put it without seeming infernally rude, but are you quite sure she's worth it? You remember what you once told me in Cornwall?"

"I remember well; I talked good sense, I believe."

"Of course. And doesn't it apply now in the same way? You see, Travers, I know Sybil myself so jolly well, too, and she's very like other people, after all."

"You think so?"

"Well, she was when I knew her best, and I don't suppose she's changed so very much."

"Oh, no!"

"And this is such a tremendous thing—this Japan job, especially just now, with the treaty on, and everything else. Bigger than Balliol, you know."

Travers looked at him and felt proud of his whilom pupil. He was putting it well, there was no doubt about that.

"You do see what I mean, don't you? It's for your sake." Rendall's manner was very earnest.

"Of course, Rendall, old man."

"And you won't chuck it all up?"

"I only heard about it yesterday. You must give my rusty old brain time to decide. I've hardly thought yet. Well, what about the Farquharsons' dance? It's about time to go round."

But Rendall's anxiety was not dispelled. He knew now well enough the nature of this elemental conflict between career and woman; he had watched Sybil and Travers, and had seen enough to unsettle him more than a little. So the result of much meditation was to take a plunge even deeper yet—a plunge that, for all he knew, might gain him more enemies than one, but was, nevertheless, worth taking.

Sybil was in when he called next day.

"Hullo, Dick! It's you, is it—the stranger returned?" There was real surprise in her voice.

"Yes, Sybil—just dropped in for a chat, you know."

"Chat! What about?"

"Oh, nothing. That is——" Dick realised that this was rather setting the pace, and stopped.

"Well, Dick?"

"Give me tea, and I'll tell you."

His needs were soon attended to. The tea was cleared away, Sybil ensconced him in an arm-chair, put cigarettes by him, settled herself, and looked at him expectantly.

"Well?"

"It's about Harry Travers. It's all rather awkward to explain, I'm afraid." Poor Dick was indeed "going in off the deep end," as he would have termed it.

"Harry? What about him?"

"He's been invited to go to Japan with Sir John Doverfield, to the Embassy. It's a topping job."

"Japan? That's a long way away."

"Yes, isn't it? But he must take it, you know. It's a great opening."

"Yes. Why shouldn't he?"

"He doesn't seem quite certain. Seems as if he were being held back by something."

"Well?"

Dick felt desperate. This was no time for half statements.

"Don't you see, Sybil? He is being held back, I believe, because he thinks you—because of you—there!"

"Because of—me!" Sybil's words were scarcely audible.

"Yes. But don't you see what a mistake it would be if he doesn't go? He would throw away such a tremendous lot."

"I suppose he would."

"And don't you see, Syb, if *you* ask him to go, he'll go, but not unless."

"And—you want me to ask him to go?"

"Yes. It's the only way. You don't mind, do you?"

Silence.

"I'm awfully sorry if I've annoyed you, Syb, but he's such a topping chap, and it would be a pity."

"No, Dick, it's all right. I've only got rather a headache this evening. I'm sorry I'm a bit stupid. Yes, I quite understand. It would be better for him to go."

"And will you ask him?"

"Yes. He's coming to-morrow for the week-end. I'll ask him then. I'm afraid you must go now, though, Dick—I've got to dress."

Dick needed little asking. A hasty good-bye, and he fled, the prey of mixed feelings. And Sybil remained alone, gazing long at a dying fire.

* * * * *

"So you think I should take the job?" said Harry Travers, as they walked home together from church the next day.

"Yes, of course. It's *the* thing. You'll do well there. I'd never speak to you if you didn't," said Sybil in her usual cheery and decisive voice.

"I think I shall. After all, there's no reason why I shouldn't."

"None at all."

"Nobody dependent on me here, or anything like that."

"No, you're quite unfettered."

"It isn't as if I were married or engaged."

"No, everything points to your going."

"You really think so?" Harry was looking quietly at her.

"Of course I do. It'll be your making. I shall be awfully disappointed if you don't."

"Yes, I think you're right. But it'll be a long good-bye, I'm afraid."

"Well, what of that?" Sybil's voice was quite hard and unsympathetic.

"Will you miss me?" The question came with sudden directness.

"Oh, yes, naturally. But that's not the slightest reason why you shouldn't go. Give me back my Prayer Book, please. I'm sorry you had to grope for it so under the seat." And Sybil laughed merrily at the recollection. Sybil had always been a cheery soul. Rendall was obviously justified in his belief that she hadn't changed since he'd known her. A little shallow, perhaps, but a cheery soul.

"I'm glad Travers is going," he said, when he heard the news. "He'll go out, and do well, and marry and settle down, and come back no end of a pot."

"Yes, he probably will," said Sybil. "It'll be jolly to hear of it all happening."

"Hope he writes sometimes."

"Oh, I expect he will—at first."

* * * * *

"Coming home on leave, is he?" said Mr. Phillimore in astonishment. "Fellow that hasn't been out there eighteen months? Well, upon my soul! Sooner this Government goes out, the better—the way they let these young fellows play with work nowadays!"

"Oh, I don't think Mr. Travers would ever quite do that, Daddy," said Sybil quietly. "I can't imagine it."

"Well, I always thought he seemed an industrious, solid sort of fellow," acknowledged Mr. Phillimore grudgingly. "But this beats me. Wonder he bothered to go out at all. When's he arriving?"

"Next week, I suppose. He says he's sailing by the next boat," said Sybil, glancing at the letter.

"Must ask him down. As good a young fellow as I've met. But why the Government allows it, beats me—beats me altogether!"

But it was not at her father's invitation that Harry Travers came to Deepdene.

"Harry!" gasped Sybil in utter astonishment. "How in the world did you get here so soon?"

"Simple enough. Boat special yesterday afternoon, night express, and here I am. Got any lunch? And I shouldn't mind a wash."

"Yes, Harry, but why?"

"Why what?"

"Why did you come so soon—like this?"

"What did you expect me to do—write?"

"Write what?"

"Write, asking you to come to me instead."

"Me—to come—to you?"

"Of course, I could have done that," said Harry, "but it's better to come oneself in these cases."

"Oh, Harry, what cases?"

"Cases where you claim what's yours—as I have come to claim you for always, dear one!"

"Harry! Dear Harry, then do you love me at all?"

"Why, yes. Why else should I go to Japan and then come back?"

"But—I—thought you went not caring specially for anybody. Tell me, Harry, then why did you go?"

"To be certain—why else?"

"And did you love me when you went?"

"You knew."

"I—I wondered. And then I thought you didn't, and so I pretended not to mind, and asked you to go."

"Yes." And he produced a miniature photograph of a head, obviously cut out of a larger group. "And if this hadn't dropped out of your Prayer Book on that very morning—— But, as it is, I've come from the end of the world to claim you. Was I wrong?"

"The end of the world!" And in the silence that followed the under-gardener slunk out from behind the greenhouse and crept away. The under-gardener was a man of tact.

* * * * *

"Yes, I'm the luckiest fellow in the world," said Travers to Rendall that evening, as they shook hands.

But it was hardly Rendall's fault that he smiled ever so faintly as he congratulated him.



FIR TREES.

BY BIRKET FOSTER.

BRILLIANT ISLAND

By the late T. P. CAMERON WILSON

Captain

Illustrated by Maurice Greiffenhagen, A.R.A.

STANFORD remembered having scarlet fever when he was a small boy, and lying still for hours, staring at a picture on the wall. It had been a coloured supplement to some Christmas annual, and it represented a little smiling girl and a pony. Stanford remembered that he had liked it at first—it was cheerful and "pretty"—but gradually there had grown up in his soul a hatred for it that was almost religious. He would turn his aching eyes to every corner of the room—to the ceiling, the window, the door—but always they would come back to that smiling atrocity. Finally he had begged his mother to turn its face to the wall, and so had obtained relief for this sickness of the eyes.

Now, in all this there lies a parable, for Stanford, at the age of thirty, found himself confronted once more with a smiling face which was always before him, and which had begun to irritate him almost beyond endurance. It was a broad, red Irish face, belonging to one Peter Lannay, and it seldom ceased from smiling. Stanford had admired this trait of Lannay's—at first. He had liked his cheeriness, his sense of humour, his rather boyish delight in healthy rowdiness. But now eight months of what Lannay himself called "swamp and sweat and silence" had strung Stanford's nerves nearly to breaking-point, and he found himself actually hating the Irishman for his good humour, hating him with that petulant disgust which, with a woman, breaks so easily and harmlessly into hysterics. With a man it is apt to be otherwise, and that Stanford did not collapse into dangerous hysteria was due in part to a certain Papuan news-carrier who, as you shall hear, raised his horrible woman-voice at precisely the right moment.

Lannay came in to breakfast that morning disgustingly cheerful, and hit Stanford on the spine with a huge playful fist. This is a deplorable method of saying "Good morning!" at any time and, in any place, and men in better condition than Stanford have resented it with vigour and heat. Stanford turned white.

"Y'old glum-face!" said Lannay. "How is it ye can be so long in the jowl on a mornin' when all the world's laughin' at ye?"

Stanford said nothing. The native servant—a Papuan with some of his hideousness hidden under a sort of surplice—grinned expectantly, for he loved Lannay, and had only fear and contempt for Stanford. All the world loves a man who laughs.

"I am *not* glum," said Stanford, with the precision of the worst kind of governess; "I am merely my normal self. Unless I am grinning like an ape, you appear to consider that I am on the point of weeping. Surely——"

"Oh, for the love of Mike, stop it, Stanford! Ye're like an ould maid in an east wind!"

"I acknowledge that I am accustomed to a more civilised kind of treatment than yours. It is years since I found horse-play amusing."

Over his coffee cup the Irishman studied the other with shrewd eyes.

"You're wantin' a change, Stanford," he said. "This place is gettin' on your nerves."

"Nerves!" spluttered Stanford. He was shaking as though he was cold, and there were little beads of sweat under his eyes.

Lannay swore at himself mentally for not having noticed danger signals before. He made his voice soothing and quiet, as he did when talking to a fractious horse.

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"It's myself that's a big, blunderin' fool, Stanford," he said, "an' I'm sorry if I annoyed ye. Will we be takin' a day off this mornin', and forgettin' that ould cargo we've been worryin' about? The steamer'll not be here till next month, and we've weeks to get the stuff——"

He broke off in despair, for Stanford had obviously reached breaking-point, and every word spoken by the Irishman was touching a raw nerve. For a moment there was silence, while Lannay thought of certain drugs that he kept in a little medicine chest in his bedroom, and wondered which was the best remedy for a mixture of nerves and fever. He had seen this same mixture before in a score of out-of-the-way corners of the world, and he had seen it cured, or at worst ended, by a liberal use of whisky. But he knew that Stanford was almost a teetotaler, and he feared.

"I'm sick of it!" said Stanford, and his voice rose in a thin, dangerous crescendo. "I'm sick of it all—swamps and silence, and niggers, and eternal money-grubbing! Sending stuff home that we've sweated our souls out to get, that we've turned slave-drivers to get, and then being paid dirty dollars for it by filthy tobacco-stained skippers who aren't fit to lick our boots!"

He struck the table with his fist.

"That last skipper spat when he gave me his dirty notes. *Spat!* And at home we wouldn't have allowed him in the kitchen! I'm sick, sick, sick of it!"

From far across the valley came the high, thin note of the news-carrier, not unlike the twang of a struck tuning-fork, yet insistent as a factory steam siren, cutting like steel through the quiet morning.

Both men turned mechanically towards the open door and listened. Behind them, on the hill, a second news-carrier answered the call, and repeated his message as it came.

"There is war," chanted the hidden voice, "war between white man and white man." The voice trailed away into silence.

"Holy Mike!" said Lannay. "They've done it! It's Brilliant Island. I said it! I said it! Wasn't I after sayin' it, Stanford?"

He danced a sort of solemn jig, and in his eyes shone the joy that an Irishman has in a fight.

Stanford stared at him with a slow dawning of comprehension.

"Do you mean that the traders are fighting?" he asked.

"Of course the traders are fighting," said Lannay gleefully. "Who else would that heathen with the female voice be after meanin'? It's come at last, and haven't I seen it comin'? The way those fat Germans do be after glaring when a Frenchman so much as passes 'em, and the way they keep from flyin' at each other's throats the time they're loadin' the steamers together! Holy Mike, but 'twill be the devil of a scrap, an', when they've done killin' each other, 'tis ourselves will get their trade, me boy. They've natives trading with Brilliant Island who would sell their mothers for the price of a drink. 'Tis the best trading centre west of this blot on the earth."

The interest that had lightened Stanford's eyes, and made him for a moment forget himself, died at the mention of trade, and Lannay saw it die. At all costs he must bring it back.

"Stanford," he shouted, "we'll be in this! We'll go there this moment."

"Go? Where?"

"To Brilliant Island, of course. It's a bare fifty miles, an' the trip'll do us both good. I've finished the new sail, and there's just a capful of wind that'll take us along westward nice and lazily. But I'd like to get in a smack at them greasy Deutschers! They've done us dirty tricks by the dozen, an' they're for ever swankin' about their mouldy country, and smilin' like fat images when I throw Ould Ireland in the yellow teeth of them."

Stanford smiled with a sort of happy reluctance.

"There's Steinbauer," he said, "who proves everything by what he calls logic, and makes his points with a fat, yellow finger, as though he is punching holes in the air. He never listens to anyone else's arguments. He proved to me once by logic that England couldn't last longer than five years as a nation."

"Don't I know the swine well?" said Lannay. "I mentioned King Edward once to 'm, and he smiled and said something in German, and then spat—said he was speakin' of the weather, when I asked him."

"Yes, I think we'll go down to Brilliant," said Stanford, "and, if it's real fighting, we'd better take guns."

"Of course it's real fightin'. 'War,' he said. That's the real stuff. Sure I'll take me Colt and a shot-gun. There's room for a spreadin' shot in Steinbauer's trousers!"

They smiled happily at each other.

"Thank Heaven!" said Lannay to himself.

"He's after bein' all right again now, and there's no need to use me drugs, an' a free scrap thrown in, an' all!"

He whistled as he cleaned his Colt.

* * * * *

Now, Brilliant Island lay at that moment silent under the sun, with lazy sea-birds calling above her beaches, and she was untroubled by any war. She was tranquil even before the rumour of a great European War which boatmen from a neighbouring island had brought only that morning. Trading was the business of the little German colony that lived there, and trading alone troubled them. If nations chose to fight, they could fight. This was their attitude, coupled with a serene faith in that humble and beautiful creed which is summed up in the phrase "Deutschland über alles." Occasionally, it is true, they allowed themselves to be troubled by the French traders who lived on the nearest island, and who represented in those lonely seas the grim spectre of "competition," but only occasionally, when trade was bad. To-day nothing disturbed the after-breakfast peace of Steinbauer, who smoked a black cigar and dreamed of making money.

Eastward, he reflected, they had nothing to fear in the way of competition. Fifty miles away in that direction a lonely couple of Englanders fought for existence in the unorganised way that Englanders had. They were beneath contempt. Westward, on Glory Island, it was true that the Frenchmen did good trade with natives from the Western Islands, but there were methods. . . . The German smiled over his cigar. For years he and his partners had fought a steady battle beneath the surface of things—a clever, subterranean warfare that appealed to their Teutonic souls. Scarcely a single native who visited Brilliant Island had gone away unpoisoned with their venomous whispers concerning the Frenchmen. They had worked steadily, with an amazing thoroughness, at the business of vilifying their trade rivals, and arousing against them in the native mind suspicion and hatred and fear. Many of the natives, for instance, who lived scarcely an hour's sailing from Glory Island, would go thirty miles further east than they need, in order to trade with the Germans, who generally cheated them.

Oh, yes, there were methods! And again Steinbauer smiled over his cigar. But it was all quiet, hidden, below the surface, delightfully German. There was no sign of war on that quiet morning, either on Brilliant Island or on the little sun-washed island where the Frenchmen lived. But Lannay was cleaning his guns.

II.

THE new sail bellied lazily to the "capful" of wind, and they watched the beach grow small astern. Lannay filled a pipe and whistled blissfully, while Stanford, with clear brow and expectant eyes, watched the horizon and was glad. Occasionally he fingered his old double-barrelled shot-gun with a sort of affectionate care. He had shot rabbits with it in an English park, and he loved it as one can love a gun. Gulls wheeled screaming about them, and the water lapped lazily against the boat as they slipped westward on a sea that was blue as a blue flame.

"Suppose we find that they're not fighting?" said Stanford presently.

"*Not* fightin'? Of course they're fighting! Haven't I seen it comin'?"

"But these news-carriers—they get hold of rumours."

"Rumours, is it? Haven't you seen yourself?"

"Yes, but——"

"Stanford, boy, there's devil a 'but' in ut! 'War,' he said, 'war between white men and white men!' What more d'ye want, you ould Saxon? Is ut logic ye want—after the style of yer friend Steinbauer, bad luck to 'm?"

Stanford smiled and touched his gun again lovingly.

Brilliant Island began to loom ahead, and they watched it in silence as it grew distinct, with its dark clumps of hibiscus, its little cluster of white bungalows, and its flagstaff on the hill.

"Divil a sound of firin'!" said Lannay. "This is what they call a lull in the battle, or maybe all the fightin' is on Glory Island. That's what it is! They've invaded Glory, the fat devils! Put her round a bit, Stanford. We'll head for Glory."

Stanford put her round, and they headed for Glory. A little white wing of foam curved against her side as she answered to the helm. Beyond the sloping green shoulder of Brilliant Island the fringe of Glory began to show against the horizon.

"There they are!" shouted Lannay. He stood up and pointed. Between the two islands lay a little yacht, very like their own, but flying a jaunty tricolour at her masthead.

"She's *La belle France*," said Stanford. "There's not much invasion about this."

But Lannay was undaunted.

"Y'ould sceptic!" he returned. "What would the Frenchmen be doin' there, if it wasn't fightin'? 'Tis *they* are after the Germans, that's all, and we must be after helpin' them. Listen!"

Across the blue laughter of the sunlit sea came the clear sound of what is, perhaps, the most stirring tune in the world—the Marseillaise. Even Stanford was moved to a sort of mild intoxication by the echo of passion in it, for he was listening not so much to the voices of men as to the voice of a great nation. Lannay stood up in the boat and sent a wild cheer ringing over the water. Then, with startling suddenness, Stanford fired a double-barrelled salute into the air with his shot-gun, and, for some reason known only to himself, Lannay broke out into the strains of "The Wearing o' the Green," while he reloaded. A fat, white-clad figure burst from the door of the bungalow on the hill, and stood staring down at them, shading his eyes from the sun.

"Steinbauer," said Stanford.

The little yacht was close in now, with *La belle France* tacking against the breeze and bearing slowly down on her. The beach shelved very suddenly on this side of Brilliant Island, and boats could sail easily within a few yards of the shore. Stanford, looking down, saw a silver fish swimming lazily, and a pink umbrella-shaped jelly-fish in the shadow of the sail.

Steinbauer came waddling down the path from the bungalow, and shouted a question. He was answered by a yell of Celtic execration from Lannay, who was now drunk with his own emotions. The German stood still and seemed to hesitate. Then he turned back towards the bungalow.

He was barely fifty yards from the water's edge, and he was bent almost double in his efforts to propel his enormous body up the steep and somewhat slippery slope. Stanford took careful aim at his duck trousers, and fired.

Other figures had appeared outside the bungalow, and had been watching events with an awakening interest, which changed to a sort of amazed panic when Steinbauer, like a wounded rogue elephant, charged into their midst, spraying them with explosive Teutonic oaths.

In a moment the island appeared deserted—only a face at one of the bungalow windows showed palely for a moment and then vanished.

Meanwhile Lannay was welcoming the Frenchmen.

"We are on your side, moosyer," he explained over the bows of his boat. "My friend and myself will fight for you to the death."

"But I do not compre'end," said the French trader, torn between a grave amazement and a desire to laugh with his fellows at the irresistible sight of Steinbauer charging uphill and bellowing his anger to Heaven.

"This battle," explained Lannay—"we heard this morning that you were fighting the Germans, so we came over to help you. Tell us what to do, and we'll do it." He tapped his gun and smiled.

"Battle, monsieur?" The Frenchman shook his head and turned inquiringly to his fellow-traders, who appeared as puzzled as himself.

"Yes, battle—fight—scrap—whatever you'll be namin' it."

"Still I do not compre'end. I an' my frien's, we go for a trip—a leetle cruise to see you ôn your island, and salute you in the name of our country. But battle——" He shook his head again.

"We heard from the news-carrier," said Stanford, "that there was a war between white man and white man——"

The Frenchman's face cleared, and he showed his teeth in a delighted smile.

"And you leap to think it is between us and the fat pigs *là bas?* But no. It is war between our countries and the Germans—a beeg war—the beegest war, per'aps, that anyone 'as see. That is why we come to salute you, an' sing the Marseillaise as we come, for Angland and France fight together."

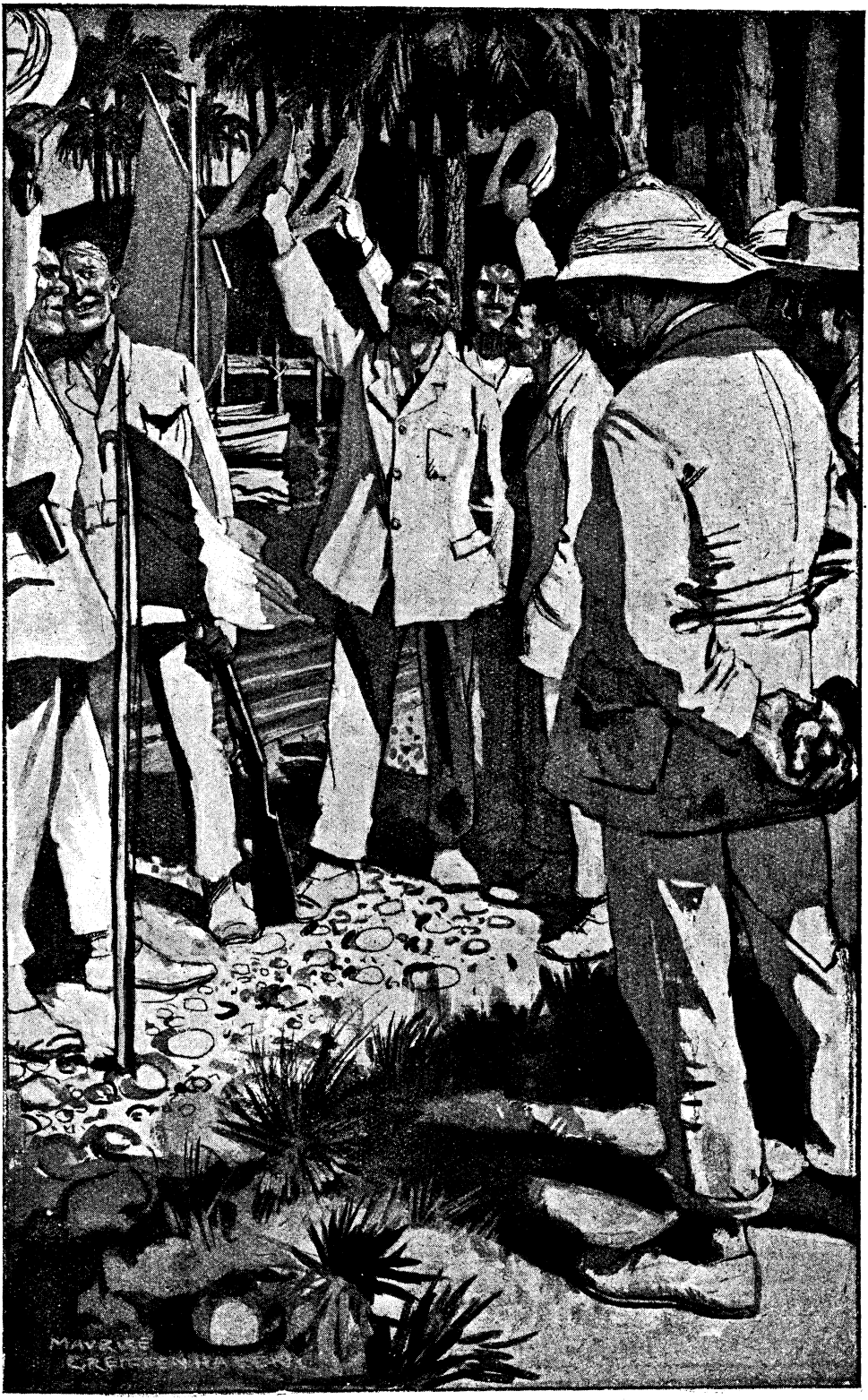
The boats had touched and were rocking side by side. The Frenchman suddenly leaned across and, putting an arm around Lannay's neck, kissed him fervently on both cheeks. Lannay grinned a little sheepishly, and then pointed to the island.

"An' what about Steinbauer?" he asked.

The Frenchman shrugged his shoulders. "Here we have kep' peace," he said. "Traders cannot afford to shed blood. I am afraid——" The door of the bungalow opened, and something fluttered out on the end of a stick. It was white.

"Holy Mike!" said Lannay. "If 'tisn't the white flag!"

Over the tranquil sea rang a sound more



"The cheers made the Germans start apprehensively."

uncommon there than the sound of firing—it was boisterous, ungovernable laughter. The Frenchmen held on to each other and sobbed out their enjoyment on each other's shoulders. Lannay laughed aloud and madly, slapping his thighs and invoking obscure Celtic saints, while Stanford, in the half-hysterical relief which followed the Frenchman's amazing news, giggled like a school-girl at that waggling absurdity on the hill. Then Lannay, in a fresh burst of madness, fired his Colt into the air, and they fell to laughing again as the white flag was snatched hastily from sight.

"'Tis a piece of Steinbauer's trousers they've torn off for a truce flag!" gasped Lannay. "Dear life, but this is a day! Will we be havin' a palaver with the swine?"

Someone produced an enormous white handkerchief, and this was secured—to the accompaniment of sundry bursts of merriment—to a boat-hook, and duly waved to and fro before the hidden eyes of the bungalow.

Presently the door opened again, and a German appeared, bearing in his hand a broomstick from which dangled a white cloth. He came delicately down the path, and stood in dramatic loneliness on the beach.

"For the love of Mike," whispered Lannay, "keep as solemn as if 'twas the Day of Judgment!"

"We brotest," shouted the German, "against der uncalled-for addack on a beaceful island."

Lannay stood up with all the pomp of a hero of melodrama in the limelight.

"Your country," he called, "is at war with our countries. I call upon you to—(Heaven help me, or I'll break down! What will I say next, Stanford—surrender your island to the Allied Forces, of which I am the credited representative? Mike, but that's a mouthful!)—I call upon you to surrender this island to the Allied For-r-ces, of which I am the something-or-other representative. Have you got that?"

"To surrender this island?"

"That's what I was after sayin'. An' I refuse to repeat ut all. We're enemies, and if ye don't surrender the island an' all the appurtenances thereof—me own, Stanford!—we'll be openin' fire again on ye, an' this time it'll not be just rabbit-shot in the seat of Steinbauer's trousers, but Maxim guns an' four-point-sevens."

He leaned anxiously over to the Frenchmen. "Have ye got the four-point-sevens ready?" he shouted. "Ye have? *That's* all right, then! (Who knows what a four-point-seven is? It's meself that doesn't, anyway!)"

"I shall with my friends consultation hold," said the German, with dignity, and scrambled a little nervously back to the bungalow.

Silence fell over the island. They heard the gulls again, calling derisively as they wheeled against the blue. Stanford was thinking of England, and wondering whether this war was to be an end or the great beginning, when up the hill the door of the bungalow opened again, and the white flag emerged, followed this time by more than one figure.

Four Germans made their way laboriously to the beach, where they stood in a solemn row, like four gigantic penguins holding council.

"Well," shouted Lannay, "is it surrender, or the guns?"

"We are beaceful draders," said the spokesman, "and we brotest. But we must surrender, as we are a small force, and we have no virearms, but only——"

"Don't apologise! You surrender? Good! Then we'll be after comin' ashore. The wharf, Stanford, and go easy, or we'll be scrapin' the paint off her."

In ten minutes they were ashore. Their solemnity was prodigious. One of the Frenchmen had hauled down the tricolour from the mast-head, and, with courteous apologies to the Englishmen for the apparent slight to their great nation, had tied it to a boat-hook and planted it triumphantly in the shingle, where it fluttered gallantly in the wind. The whole affair was conducted with a grave air of ceremony which would have honoured an ambassador. The houses were searched for firearms, and these were collected and taken aboard *La belle France*. Then the crews of the two yachts gathered together at the foot of the flagstaff. A sullen little group of Germans watched them from the terrace.

"Gentlemen," said Lannay to the Frenchmen, "we have captured this island for the Allied For-r-ces, of which I am the—— Anyhow, we've captured it, and now the question is what to do with ut. Speakin' for myself and my friend, as Britons, I have great pleasure in handin' over to you, as representatives of France, the island an' all the appurtenances thereof, to do as you like with." He turned with a magnificent gesture to their leader.

"Moosyer," he said, "it is a gift from Britain to La belle France!"

The cheers made the Germans start apprehensively. When they had died down, the Frenchman spoke.

"Monsieur," he said, "on be'alf of my country, I accept your gift with thanks."

He stepped forward and kissed both of them ecstatically. Then his patriotism became incomprehensible. He shouted and stamped, and poured forth torrential floods of Gallic eloquence. His fellow-traders wept and laughed in sympathy, but neither Lannay nor Stanford understood a word. Yet, when he ceased suddenly and asked with an almost pathetic eagerness if they understood, Lannay promptly lied like a gentleman. He knew two phrases in French, and two only. One was *parfaitement*, and the other was *toujours la politesse*.

"*Parfaitement*," said Lannay, and blushed like a school-girl.

* * * * *

A week later an obscure trading steamer, seeking platinum among the islands, took Lannay and Stanford aboard and carried them towards civilisation—and war. They had said good-bye to the Frenchmen, and as they steamed past Brilliant Island, a little tricolour flying from the flagstaff on the hill dipped in greeting and farewell.

"Now, what do you suppose they'll do with that island?" asked Lannay.

Stanford shrugged his shoulders.

"Bit of a white elephant," he agreed, "but they were too polite to say so."

"*Toujours la politesse!*" said Lannay.



BACK IN "BLIGHTY." BY J. ABBEY.

A TOUCH OF FEVER

By CAPTAIN THEODORE GOODRIDGE ROBERTS

Illustrated by Dudley Tennant

DUTTON was in a bad way, and had been so for a matter of two weeks. During the days his legs ached and his mind shied at the lightest duties. His nights were miseries of loneliness, reasonless fears, and vague but monstrous depressions. Fatigue drove him to his hut and his blankets nightly against his will and his better judgment. There, once the candle was extinguished, a darkness that was more than physical closed in upon him; long-past indiscretions, thin and unimportant as dreams in the light of day, returned to him black as crimes; his future and all the complicated machinery of his life showed themselves to him fragile and defenceless, to be broken like a wine-glass by a single blunder of chance. When he slept his dreams brought no relief. They always awoke him like a weight on his chest. So he would relight the candle and read and smoke until sleep caught him again, this time dreamless and merciful, and held him until the cautious movements of his man building a fire in the little stove awakened him to another day.

Dutton had all but died of malaria years before, so now he put all his troubles down to that same old fever, and tried to overcome them with quinine.

At last an evening came when he did not feel equal to dining in mess, so he went to bed before dinner-time. His man brought him soup in a bowl and a double whisky. On these and quinine he dined. He read "The New Arabian Nights" by the light of three candles stuck to the corner of his washstand by drops of their own grease. The illumination was soft and cheery; the short sticks of dry oak cut from the rafters of ruined Ypres burned vigorously in the stove; the Prince of Bohemia and Colonel Geraldine adventured with their usual urbanity and grace; but, despite these good things, the nameless shadow crept in upon his cowering spirit, and a chill that no warmth of burning wood could drive away slipped into his heart like a knife. A childish, unreasoning panic possessed his soul. He sat up in his narrow flea-bag and pressed his hands to his eyes.

"What am I afraid of?" he demanded of the empty room. "Not of this touch of fever. It has never killed me yet. Am I afraid of loneliness, or ghosts, or dreams? Machine-gun fire always used to buck me up. I believe something like that would do me good and drive away my silly fancies. A bit of shelling to put my wind up—a real smashing mud-and-blood danger."

Then he remembered that his friend Day was going up that night to some of the forward batteries to see the show. The infantry were to go over at two in the morning—or was it three? Whichever it was, there would be plenty of excitement up Front all night and all to-morrow. He climbed out of bed, shivering, and began to dress unsteadily. It took him a long time. He put on his oldest breeches and heaviest boots. The laces of his boots seemed each a mile long. He found his revolver and ammunition pouch, filled the pouch, and attached both to his belt. He had to pull the belt uncomfortably tight to keep it from sagging with the weight of the pistol. He grumbled a good deal, and sat down frequently on the edge of the bed. At last he got his trench coat on. He put two field-dressings in one pocket, and cigarettes and matches in another. Then he hung his tin hat and box respirator on his shoulder, extinguished the candles, and went out from the black room to the gloom of the chilly night. A sound of guns came to him, dull,

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yet tremendous, as if there lay a reef somewhere beyond the black horizon on which a gigantic surf struck and burst and thundered without pause.

He found a car on the road in front of the camp. As he reached it, his friend Day, very bulky in coats and equipment, and armed with a formidable trench-stick, was climbing stuffily into it.

"May I come along with you?" he asked.

"As far as you like," said Day.

The car raced through the gloom. The rolling thunder of the guns momentarily took on a higher and more crashing note. They were soon in a region where spurts and flashes of red, yellow, and lilac fire painted the dark to right and left of them, before and behind them. They left the car, told the driver to retire to a certain cross-roads, and continued their journey on foot by murky and muddy ways.

Dutton felt as if he carried a ton's weight deposited in lumps about his person. His knees sagged under him at every floundering step. But his temper was up. He would show this dashed fever that his will was stronger than any fever ever brewed in any malarial swamp.

"This will be a great night," said Day, as they stumbled shoulder to shoulder. And then he added: "But what the mischief bit you to-night, old dear?"

"I have a touch of fever, and think a little excitement of this sort will do me good," said Dutton.

The gunner laughed.

"You'd make a fine doctor—I don't think," he retorted, with kindly derision in his voice.

They floundered along. Day took the lead and kept it, in spite of Dutton's heroic efforts to pull abreast of him. Day reviled every unexpected hole in the way vigorously but good-humouredly.

By this time the Boche had warmed up to the game, and many of the flashes and bursts of flame that shattered the surrounding darkness were not gun-flashes. These sometimes flamed so near at hand that the two officers threw themselves flat in the mud, with violence but without apologies. Dutton found greater and greater difficulty in getting to his feet after each violent contact with the sloppy breast of Mother Earth. But he managed it every time, thanks to the vile temper he was in. In this manner they at last reached a point in our irregular forward line of emplaced eighteen-pounder guns. There they halted for a few minutes and drew breath.

They were trudging from one blazing gun to another, and Day was eight or ten paces ahead, when the amazing thing happened to Dutton. *Something hit him—and killed him.* It was just as swift and simple and unexpected as that. He knew on the instant what had happened to him—that he had been killed—that he was now dead, according to all the accepted meanings of that grim word. There lay his body, face down in the mud at his feet, looking very bulky and imposing. A half-smoked cigarette smouldered within a foot of his right hand. He was dead, but the cigarette still lived. He stared down at himself with astonishment and pity.

"Dead!" he exclaimed.

Sudden dismay seized him.

"But what is the good of it?" he reflected. "Death should bring oblivion; but I remember everything. I haven't forgotten anything—not a single regret or a single desire. I haven't escaped anything but my mess bill—and perhaps not that. Out of everything and in nothing!"

He stood motionless there for several minutes, considering the lifeless shell of himself with bewilderment and consternation, and wondering why his friend Day did not return to ascertain the cause of his delay. He felt slighted, neglected. Suddenly his mood took a turn for the better. He remembered the battle, and his interest in it awoke and was far keener than it had been before his death. He continued his journey, moving very lightly over the torn ground. He felt tireless, energetic, but unhappy. The thought that he would never again go on leave, in the flesh, filled him with distress. He took what comfort he could from the knowledge that nothing could hit him now. Now he was air—a spirit—a ghost; but he wished bitterly that his memories were as dead as his bones and flesh back there in the mud. He saw that he had been a fool to exceed his duty and get killed so suddenly just because a touch of fever had made him restless. He remembered a half-written letter on the table back in that homelike hut that squatted so snug within its wall of sand-bags. The thought of that letter redoubled his longing to be alive again.

"Why didn't I finish it before I came up?" he sighed.

For a time he wandered aimlessly, stricken with remorse for his unreadiness for death.



"He stood motionless there for several minutes, considering the

He did not worry about the state of his soul, but about the confused condition of his worldly affairs. There lay the tragedy of his position—to be dead and helpless in the world, yet to have worldly memories and desires and the consciousness of life still alive in him.

He moved without plan, but always with a slant towards the front line. He passed hundreds of living men who looked as shadowy as himself. Many of them talked and laughed, but many of them were as silent as shadows, and the idea came to him that perhaps he was not the only spirit abroad that night, waiting for the zero hour. This idea grew in him and strengthened



lifeless shell of himself with bewilderment and consternation."

to a conviction. The night was full of waiting men, alive and dead.

By this time our guns were silent. Enemy guns spoke occasionally. The enemy's forward positions were bright with star-shells and soaring lights of many colours.

Dutton wandered forward until he came to the infantry in the jumping-off trenches. There he waited, but he did not enter the trenches. He wondered if his body had been discovered yet? Suddenly earth and sky behind him crashed into a mad fury of fire and tumult, and out in front the great shells splashed and belched in a terrific wall of violence and commotion. The barrage lifted and descended again, with

undiminished violence, on the tortured country a hundred yards farther away. Men shouted and laughed and swore, and scrambled forward out of the shallow trenches.

Dutton jumped down into the ditch and scrambled out after the infantry, afire with the excitement of battle and fortified by the knowledge that he was already dead, and so could not be killed again. For a few minutes he moved forward without plan, bewildered by the sounds and flashes about him. He went down into a little valley and up the further slope, following a detached party of about a dozen men. The mud was deep and the shell-holes many, but he felt no fatigue. Death had its advantages under certain abominable conditions, after all. He laughed at the thought; and at that moment one of the shadowy figures of the party stumbled close to him and turned.

"Mr. Bent's hit, sir," he said. "But our objective is straight ahead, about fifty yards away, I guess. It's a pill-box—— But I hear a machine-gun to the left. Hark to it! Maybe we have gone off our line a bit."

"We'll go after the machine-gun first," said Dutton. "Yes, I hear it. Duck, all of you, and follow me, if you can see me."

"We can see you all right," replied the other.

"Then you see a ghost," said Dutton cheerfully.

He located the machine-gun a minute later, and his party, now only six strong, bombed it vigorously. But it was securely dug in, and had to be dug out with the bayonet. Dutton had a rifle and bayonet by this time. He began to suspect that a large part of this sort of fighting was done by ghosts.

"In that case the man-power problem is solved," he reflected.

He stumbled upon the pill-box within a few yards of the silenced machine-gun. The sergeant was at his elbow. They found an opening in the concrete, and fired five rounds each into the mysterious interior at various angles. Then Dutton entered and struck a match. The low, round chamber was choking thick with the fumes of exploded cordite. By the dim light he saw a number of bodies sprawling on the floor. One of these crawled towards him.

"We'll keep this one, if he's alive," he said.

"He is alive, right enough," said the sergeant.

"You stay here and keep the home fires burning, while I go out and look for some of our fellows," he commanded.

"Dirty weather outside, sir. I'd wait a while, if I was you," protested the other. "The Boche is chuckin' everything at us but the kitchen stove."

Dutton laughed.

"Don't worry about me," he said. "I was killed a couple of hours ago, back among the eighteen-pounders."

Then he went out and searched about for the missing members of the little party he had appropriated. He found four of them. Two were dead and two were more or less seriously wounded. He made a journey back to the shelter with each of the wounded men, and then salvaged the machine-gun he had captured. The gun weighed no more than a feather to him. By the time he got back from his third trip, the sergeant had found and lit a candle-end, and was busy dressing the wounds of his comrades. The living German, only slightly wounded, had already tied himself up.

Dutton bundled the dead Germans outside.

"Now we have room for more wounded," he said. "I'll go out and hunt up a few."

The others looked at him wonderingly, their eyes shining in the weak light of the candle.

"You seem to be asking for it, sir," remarked the sergeant.

"For what, sergeant?" asked Dutton innocently.

"For your ticket westward, sir. You don't give your luck a chance."

"You idiot, I'm a dead man already! Haven't I told you so? My name is Dutton, and I was killed quite a while ago, back there. Remind me to show you my dead body, on our way out."

"That's a poor joke, sir, if you'll forgive me for saying so," remarked the N.C.O. "It's a fine thing to keep merry and bright, but I guess you are pushing your luck a bit too hard, sir."

"I am not joking," replied Dutton seriously.

"Very good, sir," retorted the sergeant. "You're a ghost. Maybe you have a few ghostly cigarettes in your pockets?"

Dutton felt in his pockets and produced several packets of cigarettes. The sergeant took one of these packets from his hand, opened it quickly, and gave a cigarette to each of the wounded men, including the German. He took one himself, then held the candle-end to each in turn,

"They smoke real enough," he said. "Try one yourself, sir."

Dutton sat down, leaned his shoulders against the cement wall, and lit a cigarette, and at that moment he became aware of a profound and utter weariness. He wondered at it. For the first time since his death he was conscious of his arms and his legs, and now he was painfully conscious of them and of his head as well.

"You look a sick man, sir," said the sergeant, peering at him. "Your face has gone grey as the wall behind you, but it was red enough a minute ago."

Dutton let the cigarette fall from his fingers. He brushed his hand over his face and shivered. His teeth chattered.

"This fever is like my memories," he muttered. "It sticks. You can't kill it. Fever of the soul! Great Heavens!"

"Maybe you're hit somewhere," said the sergeant. "Let me have a look, sir."

* * * * *

Dutton opened his eyes. He lay in his warm flea-bag, snug among his blankets, in his own hut. Three candles burned behind his left shoulder, on the corner of his wash-stand. Billets of dry wood, hacked and sawn from the rafters of ruined Ypres, burned cheerily in the little stove.

"I'm alive," he said. "It was a dream. Thank Heaven, it was only a dream!"

He sat up, intending to look across at his writing-table to assure himself that the unfinished letter still lay there; but his head throbbed and his vision swam, and he lay back again with a groan. He closed his eyes.

"Are you awake, sir?" someone asked.

He opened his eyes again and saw his man standing beside the bed, looking down at him with an expression of curiosity and anxiety.

"How are you feeling, sir?"

"Beastly," he whispered. "This confounded fever! What's the time?"

"Half-past nine, sir. The M.O. will be back at ten. He left this for you to drink if you woke up thirsty, sir."

Dutton took the glass and drank something bitter and cool. He drained the glass.

"Why don't you let in some light? Roll up the blind."

"It is night-time, sir. Nine-thirty."

"It can't be so early. I feel as if I had been asleep a year. And what about the M.O.? I haven't seen any M.O. to-night."

"You were asleep, sir."

"I was awake at nine o'clock."

"I've been told not to argue with you, sir, or excite you. I got a fair telling-off for letting you go out last night with the fever on you and nothing in your stomach but soup and whisky."

"Last night? I don't know what you are talking about."

"You went up Front with Captain Day, sir."

"You are crazy, Wilson. That was to-night—and it was only a dream, anyway. What do you know about it?"

"I know it was last night, sir. It wasn't a dream. You went up with Captain Day. But you are not to argue, sir."

"I can prove it was a dream. I was killed up there. Am I a dead man now?"

"More by good luck than good management that you ain't, sir, from all I hear about the way you acted."

"You're dreaming, Wilson. There's a letter on the table there that I began this afternoon. What's the date of it?"

Wilson looked.

"I'll put it away, sir. You shouldn't leave private letters lying around like that, sir. And it's dated yesterday, the sixteenth, and to-day is the seventeenth."

Dutton sat up and pressed his hands to his head for a moment. Then he stared at Wilson.

"Do you mean to tell me that I really went up with Captain Day?"

"That's what I am telling you, sir."

"Then what have I been doing ever since?"

"You've been off your chump most of the time, sir, or sleeping like a log. They brought you home this afternoon, and expect to send you to Blighty to-morrow."

"Am I wounded?"

"No, sir—for a wonder."

"But I thought I was killed."

"You didn't get a scratch, sir."

Dutton lay back again and was silent for several minutes.

"But if it wasn't a dream, then I am dead," he said reflectively.

Wilson smiled down at him pityingly.

"How much of it is true?" asked Dutton. "Did I go over with the infantry?"

"Guess you did that, sir, and no mistake," replied the other. "You were found in a pill-box this morning by stretcher-bearers—you and a sergeant and a few wounded fellows. They had you tied up to keep you from going out of the pill-box. You'd been out two or three times before that, bringing in the wounded. You told them you had been killed already, and so couldn't be hit

again. So the sergeant guessed you were off your trolley, and tied you down."

Dutton groaned.

"I must have made a proper fool of myself," he muttered. "But, thank Heaven, I am not really dead!"

A medical officer entered the hut. He seemed vastly relieved by Dutton's condition.

"I wonder that you're not dead of fatigue and exposure," he said. "I wish I knew what your temperature was when you went after that machine-gun."

Dutton smiled.

"And I wish I knew why I thought I was killed," he replied.

"Poor old Day was killed—not six paces away from you," said the M.O.

Again Dutton sat up in his flea-bag. He stared at the M.O.

"Day killed!" he exclaimed. "He was just ahead of me. Poor old Day! That explains it."

"What does it explain?" asked the doctor.

"My behaviour," answered Dutton. "Don't you see it? It's not like me to go rampaging around after machine-guns and pill-boxes, but it's just what Day lived for. When he was killed, his blessed old fighting spirit slipped into me and started me off to do in the Boche. Well, I am glad I gave him a few hours' extra fun—and very thankful that he didn't get me killed."

The M.O. laughed.

"You may be right," he said, "but it isn't Day who gets the credit for bagging a machine-gun and a pill-box and carrying in wounded."

THE WIND.

O WIND, I cannot see you pass,
And yet I feel you as you go
Around the world and every place,
Shouting and singing, loud and low.

Your breath, your touch is on my cheeks,
Such soft caressing finger-tips!
Can it be you whose anger wrecks
The high trees and the tallest ships?

You run so light o'er field and hill
You shake no frailest blossom off,
And yet make havoc, when you will,
Amid the groves and nests of love.

I hear you waking up from sleep
Over the hills and far away,
You giant, roaring as you leap
O'er lambs and daisies at their play!

O wind, your name makes music sweet!
You are a lovely thing, O wind!
And how the world were incomplete
Without your unseen presence kind!

For now your arms are round my neck,
And now your buffets are too rough,
Your sharp-sweet kisses on my cheek,
And your fierce clasp and your wild love.

The fool hath said it in his heart,
There are no miracles. O wing,
Confute him where you fly apart,
Close-felt, beloved, invisible Thing!

KATHARINE TYNAN.



SORTING TOBACCO.

CIGARETTES IN THE MAKING

METHODS AND PROCESSES OF A GREAT MODERN INDUSTRY

By W. R. FLEMING

Drawings by Halberde; photographs by Clarke & Hyde

IT is the hour of the cigarette, which has fully come into its own in these days of strife. The luxury of peace has become the necessity of men of war, and the cult of the cigarette is now a pious and patriotic act. Old prejudices have vanished, and the supply of the fragrant and soothing whiff to our troops in the trenches occupies a foremost place among war benevolences and war industries. The output has leaped to unparalleled dimensions, the manufacturers are busy as they have never been before, and all over the country private organisations, see that the "smokes" are duly forwarded to our fighting men, who receive them with a gratitude impossible to estimate.

Much legendary lumber clings about the story of tobacco. It was known before Raleigh brought the plant from the West Indies, and the parable of his servant having thrown water over him, as "he took a private pipe at Myrtle Grove," is quite apocryphal. But the weed was early a controversial subject. The first satire upon it was "Work for Human Chimneys," published in 1602. This drew forth "A Defence of Tobacco," and two years later King James I. issued his famous "Counterblast." These tirades were for or against the pipe. The cigarette was still some distance ahead. It arose with the Spaniards. Years before it was known or widely adopted

in this country the late John Phillip, R.A. ("Phillip of Spain") immortalised the airiest of all smokes in his exquisite canvas "El Cigarillo," where a Spanish beauty is enjoying a quiet whiff. The misty filming of the half-closed eyes of the smoker has since that time become very familiar to an age in which ladies no longer disdain the spells of My Lady Nicotine. The cigarette is full of romance; for is not its making inseparably associated with that most passionate of operatic heroines, Carmen?



UNPACKING HOGSHEADS OF VIRGINIAN LEAF.

How, then, does this potent factor in modern life, the cigarette, come into existence and reach the consumer? It is an elaborate process, and the finished article has developed far from the original simple form, contrived in a moment by the smoker himself. Brazilians are content to wrap a paper round tobacco, tie a silken thread to keep the whole together; so they smoke it.

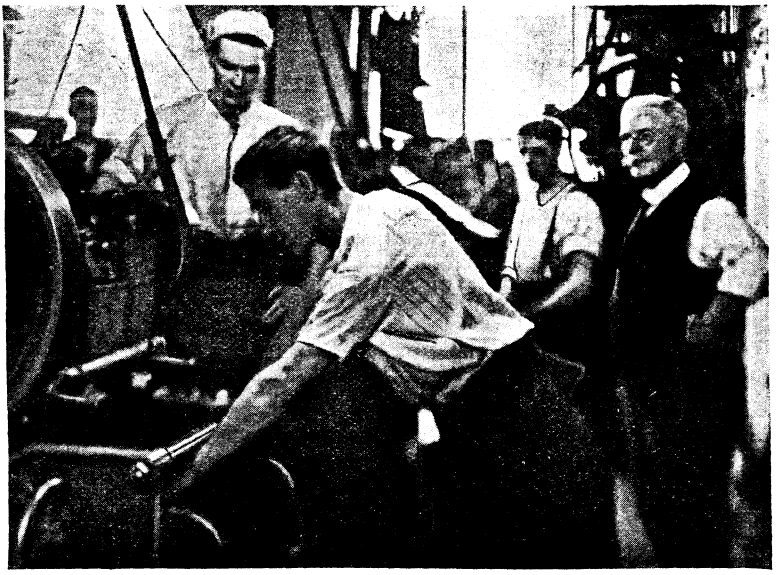
The Spaniard scorns any manufacture beyond the scientific and rapid rub up the side of his leg which leaves a round roll between his fingers. This, without further trouble, he holds together as he smokes, happily untroubled by its lack of obvious cohesion.

But mere rolling is practically the last stage of manufacture. A great deal has to be done before that is reached. The three principal tobaccos used for cigarettes smoked in this country are Virginian, Turkish, and



STRIPPING TOBACCO.

Egyptian. The terms "Turkish" and "Egyptian" are not very clearly understood by the man in the street. It is important to note that no tobacco is grown in Egypt. The tobacco of the Egyptian cigarette is grown in Turkey, and is exported to Egypt for manufacture into cigarettes. The Turkish cigarette, as made in this country, is manufactured from pure tobacco, but Turkish as exported from Egypt may or may not contain added matter. In any case, it differs from the Turkish cigarette of this country. Infinite are the varieties of the Turkish leaf, different localities producing the most surprising variations of colour and quality. But no single variety of leaf is smoked pure.

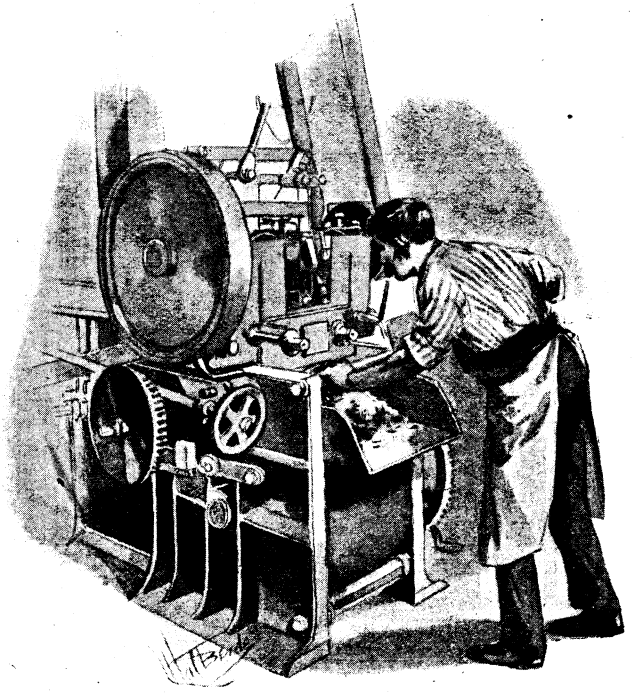


CUTTING TOBACCO.

The great excellence of the cigarette, and the master secret of its manufacture, is the blend. There are blends for aroma, blends to regulate the rate of burning, blends for colour. Colour is a great factor. The best Virginian blend is pure yellow golden, the best Turkish a golden brown. To be a successful blender requires a lifetime of experience, and to some extent the faculty must be born in the man. In like manner, the judge of the different varieties of the raw leaf must have been at it all his days. It is not given to every man to compass this mystery.

To make a particular blend, varying quantities of different grades and growth are mixed together and allowed to lie for a few days, in order that the distinctive characteristics of the particular leaves may be interchanged. It is surprising that a very small percentage of any particular grade of leaf can exercise a very powerful effect on the smoking qualities of the cigarette.

The new leaf shrivels in sorrow in company with a perfect forest of its fellows, as it is packed into hogsheads and consigned to the holds of



A CUTTING MACHINE.

vessels and the care of H.M. Customs, from whence it is rescued when the tobacco duty is paid—duty which amounts to about £400 each hogshead. When we talk of hogsheads of tobacco, it is well to remember that this refers only to Virginian. Turkish tobacco leaves are much smaller than American, and the central stem is therefore much smaller, and is generally not removed, as is done in the case of American tobacco. The Turkish tobacco is therefore shipped in bales or cases, and the leaves—carefully selected—are all packed flat in the most beautifully regular manner.

The dry, crumpled leaves of Virginia and the flat-packed leaves of Turkish, when unpacked, receive their first attention at the hands of women, who, after a process of moistening has made the leaves pliable, carefully open their crushed forms.



THE DRYING AND FINISHING OF CIGARETTE TOBACCO: THE TEMPERATURE OF THIS DEPARTMENT IS ALWAYS AT "SUMMER HEAT."

The mass is first stemmed and then consigned to the guillotine, through which the leaves pass. In certain big factories a large number of these cutting machines, with the guillotine knife sixteen inches broad, are employed at once, the absorption by each machine requiring all the time of three men—the bringer of the leaves, the arranger and feeder of the instrument, and the man who receives the tobacco when it has assumed the form we more easily recognise.

Even then its complexions are various. From pale gold to almost black, it proclaims its different birthplaces by its colour. The birthplaces of the Virginian leaf are South and North Carolina, East Carolina, and the "Old Belt" districts. There is also the "hill-grown" variety. From these districts comes the tobacco that supplies all the materials and all the flavours of the various blends of Virginian. The expert recognises each and all localities responsible for the product. But, wherever it comes from, it all suffers the indignity of being "panned," and heat dries some of the moisture which it has been necessary to employ in its manipulation.

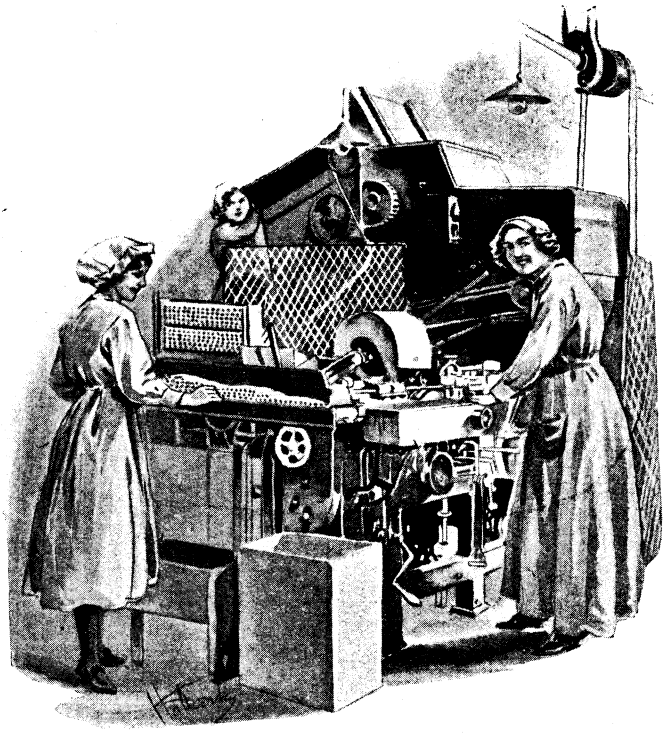
After winnowing, yet another process is undergone, known as "cobbing." Men lay the tobacco smooth while it is still hot, round rolls of steaming fragrance—bundles of about six pounds each. These are levelled upon trays, and ultimately shelved to await requisition by the cigarette makers, who convert them into their new form.

Then, to revive it from panning, it is in some cases fanned by machinery. This is accomplished by the aid of huge sieves through which air is forced, and the tobacco palpitates till a small percentage of water only remains, this being a point for careful adjustment. Thirty per cent. is permitted by law, but, as a matter of fact, this applies only to the cheaper forms of pipe tobacco. The natural moisture is already much dried down, before shipment, by the handlers on the other side. The moisture of a cigarette in good smoking condition, whether expensive or not, would average fifteen to sixteen per cent., which is very little, if any, more than the moisture in the leaf as delivered in this country in the hogshead or tierce.

The force of the knife, when cutting, presses the strands of tobacco closely together, and they adhere to each other. The operations of panning and fanning, besides drying to

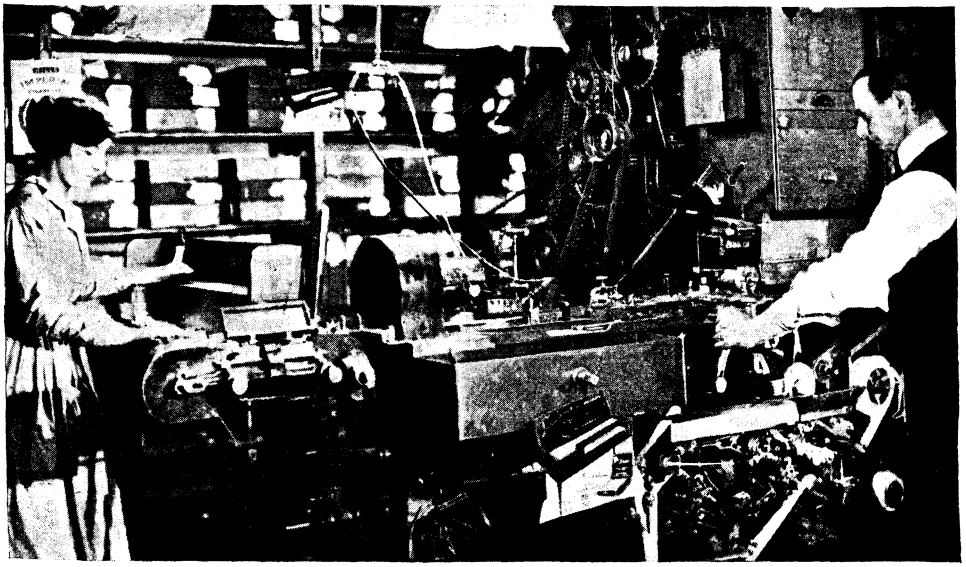
the required moisture percentage, separate the strands, and the tobacco, instead of being more or less in flake form, as it is when leaving the cutting machines, becomes loose, fleecy, and bulky. In some works, however, fanning is now avoided, and the cob from the pan allowed to dry out naturally.

After the leaf has been cut, it goes through various processes, which differ in different factories, and are not to be explicitly described. It must not be supposed, however, that last year's tobacco harvest comes to the manufacturer at once. Artificial processes of preparation are necessary and valuable, but they must wait, for the maturing power of time is an indispensable factor. About three years is the average time for the crop to mature in store before it is ready to be treated by the cigarette maker.



A CIGARETTE MACHINE REQUIRING TWO OR THREE GIRLS: OUTPUT TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND TO THIRTY THOUSAND CIGARETTES AN HOUR.

Down in the basement of the factory the cutting machines hum incessantly, and to feed these a great array of workpeople—men, girls, and boys—is kept constantly busy. The youngest *employés* are put first to releasing the bundles of golden leaf from the hank into which they are tied with other leaf, as the American tobacco is. Turkish leaf of good quality is



ONE OF THE MOST UP-TO-DATE AUTOMATIC MACHINES USED IN MAKING CIGARETTES FOR THE SERVICES.

strung by the passing of a string or other cord through the extreme butt of the stem. From this duty the girls are promoted step by step to higher posts and higher pay. They become sorters, a work which requires a certain amount of knowledge and skill, as some choice of leaf is involved. And another important branch is the removal of the centre stem from the tobacco leaf. This requires a peculiar knack, and is accomplished by a dexterous twist of the stem round the wrist. The pay for this is proportionately greater.

Most people have seen some variety of tobacco plant in a garden. The Virginian species is the largest, and grows to a height of about seven feet. From the tall, stout stem the long leaves radiate in successive tiers, separated by a considerable length of stem. The leaves about half-way down the stem are the choicest. When the farmer starts picking the crop, the lower leaves are gathered first, and the remainder gradually removed from the plant as they reach maturity. The lower leaves carry a certain amount of sand, which is washed up on to them by rain. A very wet season greatly increases the percentage of sanded leaves. The lower leaves are not, as a rule, imported into this country, owing to the high rate of duty, which is charged without any allowance for the amount of sand in the tobacco. Thus in one way a high duty guarantees the purity of tobacco or cigarettes. Harvests of tobacco differ just as vintages do, and the fragrant weed has its famous years, like wines, only they are, perhaps, better known to the manufacturer than to the consumer.

The tobacco, once it is cut and blended, passes to the great drying, filling, and packing departments in the higher storeys of the factory. The scene of industry is animated and interesting. Let us look for a little at a typical house, employing large numbers of workpeople. In one large room some five hundred people were sitting at tables, occasionally two men together and two women, but usually alternate man and woman, the scene presenting an interesting spectacle as they look up at the entrance of a stranger. Their hands are still employed



A HAND-MADE CIGARETTE DEPARTMENT IN WHICH SOME OF THE BEST GRADES OF CIGARETTES ARE MADE FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THE FORCES.

in rolling the tobacco or cutting off the ends, for these two branches of the work are pursued together, one cutter sitting between two cigarette-makers.

Here many nationalities are gathered together in cosmopolitan friendliness—Poles, Russians, English and Egyptians, and it is the Egyptian who plies his trade with the most science. He has the distinction of being accounted head of his profession.

The flat cigarette is his *chef d'œuvre*. To the eyes of the uninitiated the flat appears no more complicated than the round—both are marvellous in precision. The paper tube, already gummed for the reception of the tobacco, is at the left hand of the worker, its gaping mouth close to the tobacco, which he swiftly rolls by the aid of a small tongue-shaped piece of parchment attached to the table at which he sits. Then with a stick he gives a push to the contents of the parchment, and hey presto! it is transformed rapidly and accurately. The paper tube for the flat variety is pressed and creased into flat form, and as the tobacco is pushed into the paper by careful manipulation of the operator's fingers, the leaf is also pressed flat, so that it assumes the oval shape, which

it will retain without any additional pressure. This is partly accounted for by the fact that there is not the same gum or elasticity in the Turkish leaf as compared with the Virginian, the Turkish being much more brittle. Turkish is acknowledged to be the aristocrat of tobaccos, and those who favour it consider it the incomparable smoke. But tastes, like men, differ, and there is no disputing them. Every smoker knows the difference between the round and the flat cigarette. The shape tells almost infallibly whether the cigarette is Turkish or Virginian. The flat is mostly Turkish. The shape is not due to chance alone, for it is a remarkable fact, which cannot be explained, that Turkish tobacco in a flat cigarette smokes differently from the same tobacco in a round cigarette. Consequently, the better-class Turkish cigarettes are usually what is termed flat.

Except that the ends of loose tobacco have to be cut off with scissors, the cigarette is now finished. But it takes years of this monotonous employment to turn out a skilled workman. The old apprentice number of seven is usually required. Then the artist—who is to deny the artisan his title?—can command his three pounds a week.

Strange as it may seem, it is true that woman, for all her greater fineness of touch and delicacy of finger, has not, as a rule, beaten man in proficiency of cigarette-making. The best pay in the trade falls to the skilled cutters and blenders. The process, it will be noted, is so contrived that during the whole course of rolling, and, indeed, from the time when the bundles of leaves were detached from the stem, the tobacco is not touched by hand.

If cigarette smokers in this country had to depend only on the hand-made cigarette, the industry would require an innumerable army of cigarette makers. The great increase in demand necessitated the invention and introduction of the cigarette-making machine. During the last twenty years this has been greatly improved, and the up-to-date machine is a marvel of ingenuity. The process is, briefly, as follows—

The carefully-prepared cut tobacco is put into a hopper and passes over wired drums, which comb the tobacco, so that the threads become collected and form an unending skein. This skein of tobacco is conveyed, by means of various mechanical devices, along a groove until it meets the cigarette paper. The paper has meanwhile been mechanically unwinding from a bobbin, sufficient for from fifteen to twenty thousand cigarettes, and during its travels over various rollers it has been printed with either one or two colours, and, if necessary, with gold. At the same time it can be tipped with gold or cork, as may be required. The printing done, the paper now enters the groove and travels with the skein of tobacco until the edges of



PACKING CIGARETTES FOR DISPATCH TO THE SERVICES AT HOME AND ABROAD.

the paper are turned over and receive a touch of pure rice paste, which seals the paper. The resultant tube, which is really one long unending cigarette, passes along the machine until it encounters the cutting-knives, which cut the tube, now filled, into the required length of cigarette. The finished cigarettes fall on to a carrying-board. They are turned out at a rate of anything from two hundred and fifty to five hundred per minute. It is easy to understand that a factory equipped with a large number of these machines can supply an enormous number of smokers with their daily whiff. The rapidity of the machine as against two hundred and fifty to three hundred an hour, which is the highest rate at which a proficient man can make cigarettes by hand, speaks conclusively as to the lower cost in manufacture of the machine-made article.

About seven-tenths of the cigarette papers formerly came from Austria, and the remainder from France, English paper of the kind being practically unknown in pre-War days; but English paper-makers have now developed their products to such an extent that only an experienced judge can tell the difference between English and foreign papers. They vary in texture and material, according to the views and requirements of different houses.

When the cigarette is finished, there is still much to be done before it is marketed and sold to the smoker. It must be put up in packets. Here machinery plays a valuable part. There is an uncanny device which counts out cigarettes by tens, places them in boxes, which it shuts and seals, at the rate of five hundred a minute. The more expensive forms of cigarette are packed first in cardboard and then in tin. Air-tight tins from which air has been exhausted by suction or heat, to form a partial vacuum, are the generally approved form of packing for cigarettes for export, especially to the tropics. The cheaper brands are put up in packets and boxes decorated with the striking designs of the colour printer. Of late years an advertising factor, "the cigarette card"—a most ingenious and instructive accessory—has become very dear to the hearts of school-children.

Speaking of boxes, one of the most successful ever devised is that which contains a certain famous cigarette. On its personal reputation alone this cigarette made its way to success by private recommendation, and is one of the most popular in the Army and in civil life. Broadly speaking, it is manufactured by processes such as we have described; but every maker keeps something up his sleeve, and, naturally, does not reveal his trade secrets to the world. But, on a general view, this account of the birth of the cigarette may be taken as applicable to every brand on the market.

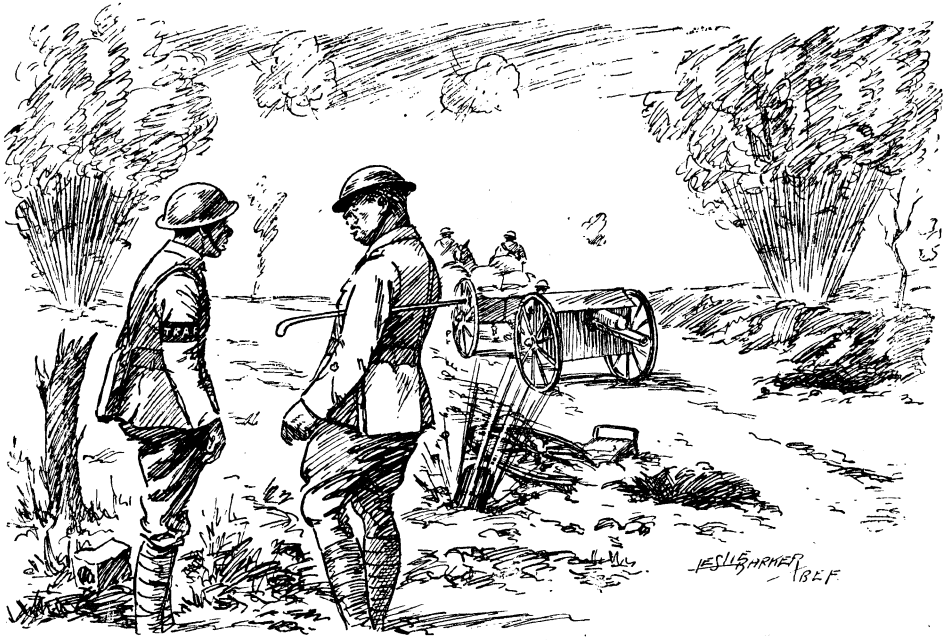
AUTUMN.

WHAT wealth untold
Of fairy gold
Lies in old Autumn's coffers!
What wondrous hues—
Reds, purples, blues—
The brave old pedlar proffers!

A dahlia here,
A sunflower there,
Nasturtiums in November—
A lurking phlox,
Late hollyhocks,
Pink rosebuds in December!

What wondrous wares
With us he shares
Till Winter comes a-meddling,
And fleet-foot goes,
On frosty toes,
To stop the pedlar's peddling!

LILIAN HOLMES.



QUITE OBVIOUS.

SERGEANT-MAJOR OF TRAFFIC CONTROL (reprimanding Traffic Control man): Yer have a nice, cushy job, but if ye're not *careful*, yer won't have it long.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

THE BRONZE MINE.

By W. J. Clarke.

To judge by the way he was smiling, the man with the bronzed face seemed well contented with himself. After a few minutes' indulgence in this inward satisfaction, he said—

"I have just done a good deed. There is a young fellow here who wants to get married, but hasn't the courage, and I have been trying to put some heart into him. I suppose he has been frightened by noticing that half-dazed, half-crazed look you often see on the faces of married men; but if he and every other hesitating bachelor would stop now and then and consider how much less a married man has to put up with than the old martyrs who were roasted over slow fires or plunged into boiling oil, it would give them a healthier outlook. Since I married Carlotta I have been through things that have nearly turned my hair grey, but if I had remained single I should probably have had to put up with things that would have made me bald; and grey hair is better than no hair at all, just as a touch of gout is better than losing both legs in a railway accident.

"I told that young fellow that married happiness is an ideal thing—all prizes and no blanks, all jam and no powder, all sunshine and no fog, all moonshine and no reality. And I told him that the cause of it is the noble way in which every woman is always doing everything she can to make her husband happy. There is nothing in this world she won't do if she thinks it is likely to please him, and I verily believe that the amount of trouble she takes in this way must amount to a pretty fair percentage of the amount of trouble a man has to put up with after he marries her.

"I know it is so with Carlotta. You would be surprised if you knew a tithe of the things she has done to please me. I will tell you about one thing she did when we were living in Italy.

"First of all, I must tell you what I was doing there. You know what bronze is? It is a mixture of copper and tin, and the curious thing is that copper and tin are both soft, but bronze is hard and suitable for cutting throats, which made it attractive to the prehistoric savage. But how could a prehistoric savage without universities or technical schools find this out? Obviously he couldn't find it out. Yet they had bronze weapons, and the ancient Egyptians had bronze tools, although it is not clear where they found the tin.

"Now, I have a theory that explains everything. I believe the prehistoric savage found a bronze mine somewhere and dug the metal up. I imagine the alloy was formed naturally

during some volcanic trouble in an early geological epoch, molten copper and molten tin getting mixed together in the proper proportion, which is about ten parts of copper to one of tin. Specimens would be found by the savages who were on the look-out for copper, and its throat-cutting superiority would be so apparent that they would dig for it. Then the Phœnicians came along and swindled them out of it, and sold it to the Egyptians.

"Carlotta belonged to Southern Italy, which is a volcanic country within reach of all the oldest civilisations, and I naturally began my investigations there. It was pretty dull work groping about disused mines and analysing anything that looked promising, and, after having no luck for a long time, I began to get discouraged.

"Then one day I came across a mine that had evidently been worked at an early date, and I found ample evidence, not only that it was a genuine ancient bronze mine, but that there might be plenty of bronze left that could be extracted by modern methods. Copper and tin are very valuable now, and I saw myself becoming a rich man; but better than that was the thought of the stir my discovery would make among the archæologists and the geologists. It meant fame as well as fortune.

"I won't go into details about the lovely time I had. I lectured to learned societies, was made a Fellow of all the important ones, was fêted by the nobility and interviewed by the newspapers, and was invited to join several exclusive clubs. The trouble began when one of my specimens was found to be hollow, and to have the words "et Fils, Paris," engraved inside.

"Then Carlotta told me all about it. She had sympathised with my disappointment at never finding anything, and, to please me, had gone to no end of trouble and expense in employing a mining engineer to have a mine salted, ready for me to discover. His carelessness in using the fragments of a broken bronze clock, with the maker's name engraved on it, was the cause of the thing being found out. But that wasn't Carlotta's fault. I think you must admit that she had done as much as a loving wife could be expected to do to make me happy, and I have no doubt there are hundreds of thousands of others who would willingly do the same.

"Of course, Carlotta could not be expected to foresee the result of her loving-kindness. The learned societies ruled my name off their books, the exclusive clubs closed their doors to me, the nobility cut me dead, and the newspapers said things about me that they usually kept for politicians. Fortunately, I was able to pay back the money that had been subscribed to the company I was forming to work the mine, and this saved me from going to prison; but, after calculating how long it would take to live the trouble down, it seemed wise to leave the country. That is the reason I am not there now."



NAMES TO SUIT.

"I S'POSE that's what they call an able-bodied seaman, isn't it, mother?"

A MAN reported to his friends that a lecture which he had delivered the evening before had proved soothing, rousing, and satisfying to his audience.

His sceptical comrades jeeringly demanded an explanation, which was given in the following terms: "It was *soothing*, for half the folks fell asleep; it was *rousing*, for the other half got up and went away; and it was *satisfying*, as they all declared that they wished *never* to hear that man again."

POLITE FRENCHMAN: Ve avait Madame for breakfast, *hein?*

BRITISH HOST: No, my wife hasn't come down this morning; she isn't getting up.

POLITE FRENCHMAN: Pardon?

BRITISH HOST: She doesn't feel up to coming down, that's all. It's worrying over the servants pulls her down; this new cook wants pulling up every minute.

Polite Frenchman feels very faint and homesick.

IN the days of slow travelling an inspector asked an Aberdeen class why Loch Fyne herring could not be bought *fresh* in the Granite City. One boy's hand shot up. "Well, my lad, why can we not get the fish *fresh?*"

"Please, sir, because they come out of *salt* water."

BLADE Economy

The "Valet" AutoStrop is the only safety razor with a self-contained automatic stropping device, and for this reason its blades last, on an average, four times as long as those of the "no-stropping" type. Probably because of this advantage, and also of the cheapness of "Valet" blades, the public do not always exercise economy in their use. The following hints will enable users to get even more than the two months' service which is claimed as the *average* life of a single "Valet" AutoStrop blade.

Use no abrasive strop dressing, and keep your strop free from grit.

Don't over-strop—10 seconds daily will keep your blade in the pink of condition.

Don't let anything hard touch the blade edge.

Hold the blade almost flat against the face. It shaves better, besides lasting longer.

There is no shortage of "Valet" blades at present, but in view of constantly increasing manufacturing difficulties, reasonable judgment and economy should be exercised in their use.

"VALET" AutoStrop Safety Razor

AUTOSTROP SAFETY RAZOR CO., Ltd., 61, New Oxford St., London, W.C.1.

And also at New York, Paris, Milan, Sydney, Dublin, Toronto, &c.

DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES

Will you send them **2/6** for  ?

232,304

200,000

180,000

The usual ANNUAL APPEAL is made for

Half-Crowns

to help to pay the Food Bill for their great family of **7,300** children.

The provision of food for **the largest family in the world** is a serious problem, especially in these times of high food prices.

Last year **232,304** Half-Crowns in all were raised for this Fund in memory of the late Dr. Barnardo, and this year **190,000** have been received to date.

Help them to reach 200,000 Half-Crowns this month.

6,447 children admitted since war broke out, a large proportion being the children of Soldiers and Sailors.

10,595 Barnardo Boys are fighting for you.

Cheques and Orders payable "DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES FOOD BILL FUND," and crossed (Notes should be Registered) and addressed to the Honorary Director, WILLIAM BAKER, Esq., M.A., LL.B., at

HEAD OFFICES: **18 to 26, STEPNEY CAUSEWAY, LONDON, E.1.**

When sending Gifts, please mention THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE, *November,* 1918.

HOW TO BECOME A

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT, CHARTERED SECRETARY,

etc. etc.

★ ★ ★

A comprehensive "Examination Guide" is issued by the Metropolitan College, dealing with the whole of the professional examinations open to the senior grades of office workers. The "Guide" shows precisely how to enter for the respective examinations, and gives useful hints regarding preparation, etc.

A copy of the "Guide" will be forwarded, gratis and post free, on receipt of a post-card addressed to the Secretary, and applicants are under no obligation to place their examination preparation in the hands of the College.

As certain of the examinations will shortly be much increased in stringency, early application is very desirable.

★ ★ ★

The Secretary (W.M. Dept.),
METROPOLITAN COLLEGE,
ST. ALBANS.

HEIGHT INCREASED IN 30 DAYS. 5/- COMPLETE COURSE.

A TALL man has many advantages over a short man. His height gives dignity, an air of importance, and commands respect.

I can add two to three inches to your height, increase your breadth of shoulder, and improve your nervous force and vitality to a surprising degree.



My system needs **no special appliances, no drugs, and no dieting.** Convenient, adaptable to any circumstances. Send 1d. stamp for particulars and testimonials, or P.O. for **5s.** for Complete Course. No extra Fees. Entire satisfaction assured.
The Melvin Strong System NEVER FAILS.

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N.B.—My system is equally successful with ladies.

COLDS quickly VANISH when

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of all Chemists.

is on your Handkerchief.

SULPHOLINE

This famous lotion quickly removes Skin Eruptions, ensuring a clear complexion. The slightest rash, faintest spot, irritable pimples, disfiguring blotches, obstinate eczema, disappear by applying SULPHOLINE, which renders the skin spotless, soft, clear, supple, comfortable. For 42 years it has been the remedy for

Eruptions Redness Rashes Eczema Acne Pimples Roughness Blotches Spots

Sulpholine is prepared by the great Skin Specialists, J. PEPPER & Co., Ltd., 6, Bedford Laboratories, London, S.E. 1, and is sold in bottles at 1/3 and 3/-. It can be obtained direct from them by post, or from any Chemist's and Stores throughout the world.

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THE PELMANOMETER



By training your mind to greater efficiency you can put yourself in the way of earning twice, three times, four times the amount you make at present.

In every profession, business and occupation there is a demand for men and women with scientifically trained minds.

Over 250,000 men and women have already been trained to greater efficiency by the famous Pelman System, which develops just those qualities of Concentration, Memory, Initiative, Ideation, Self-Confidence and Administrative Power which are in the greatest demand to-day.

HAVE YOU EVER PROPERLY REALISED THE FACT THAT IN YOUR BRAIN YOU POSSESS THE FINEST MONEY-MAKING MACHINE IN THE WORLD?

There is practically no limit to the income-earning powers of the mind when it is keyed up to the highest pitch of efficiency of which it is capable.

There are 70,000 British and Dominion officers and men studying the Course, including over 100 Admirals and Generals.

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A Course of Pelman Training is the finest of all mental exercises. It develops your mind as physical training develops your muscles. It is most fascinating to follow and takes up very little time. It is taught by post and can be followed anywhere.

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It tells you all about the successful Pelman System and shows you how to increase the money-making powers of your mind. Send a postcard or letter to-day to

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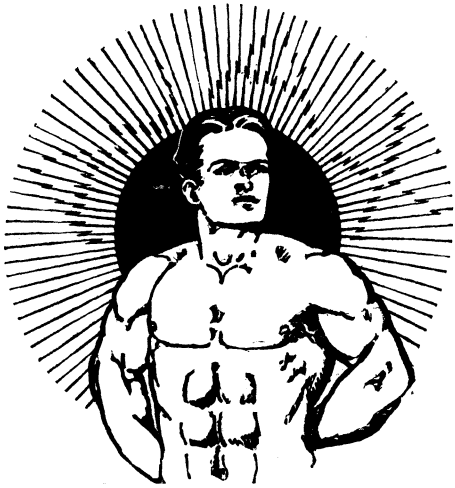
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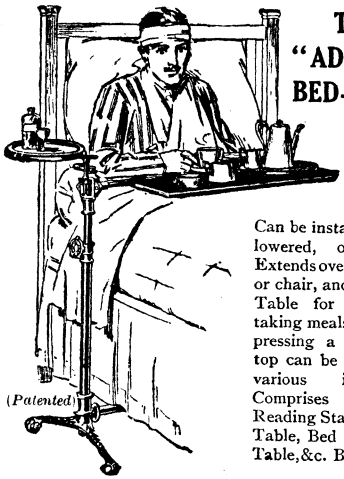
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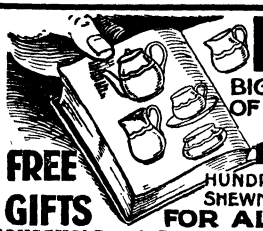
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You *can't* possibly get wet in the

30/- Mattamac

Feather Weight Waterproof

A 'Mattamac' is identical in appearance with the usual three-guinea Weatherproof. In utility also it equals its twice-more-costly Competitor. It wears as long, weighs one-third, and is absolutely Waterproof. Though light and compact-folding, it is Wind-proof as well as Wet-proof, and can be used *additionally* as a light Overcoat for Driving, Motoring, etc.

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FOLDS INTO THIS SIZE.

Fits the jacket pocket or Attaché Case.



30/-

For Lady or Gentleman. Also made for Officers, Rankers. Cavalry, and V.T.C.

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3 ozs. HEAVIER THAN AN UMBRELLA.

You can carry a 'Mattamac' as easily as a newspaper or umbrella. You can even fold it to fit into your jacket pocket or Attaché Case. Yet it gives a genial warmth and complete protection in the worst weather—at half the cost and one-third the weight of ordinary Weatherproofs.

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And at 29, Old Christchurch Road, Bournemouth.

HOW SOLDIERS STOP RHEUMATIC PAINS WITHIN TEN MINUTES

Georges Carpentier, the Noted French Aviator and Champion Boxer, says Soldiers End the Misery without Internal Medicines.

Gives some good common-sense advice to civilians suffering from painful rheumatism, gout, lumbago, sciatica, neuritis, stiff joints, sore muscles, backache, etc.

Rheumatic misery is a very common complaint amongst soldiers. Conditions in the damp, cold trenches, especially in winter, are such as often to develop painful rheumatic symptoms even with men who have never experienced anything of the kind before, and fancied themselves immune from these or any uric acid tortures. Civilians can hardly realise the severity of exposure suffered in the trenches and by airmen at high altitudes.

By far the best treatment I know of to stop rheumatic or, in fact, almost any muscular pains, stiffness in joints, etc., etc., is prepared by dissolving in water, preferably rather hot, a good handful of Reudel Bath Saltrates, which most chemists keep ready put up in packets at slight cost and of convenient sizes, so giving the treatment a trial is a simple matter. A few minutes of resting either the entire body or simply the affected parts in the highly medicated and oxygenated water thus produced, draws out pains or aches, and limbers sore muscles or joints more quickly than anything else I have ever tried. The saltrated water also has excellent soothing, healing, and antiseptic qualities when used for skin affections or inflammation and irritations generally. I was informed by an army medical officer that Reudel Bath Saltrates contained certain essential constituents found in the medicated bathing waters at famous natural medicinal springs.



Soldiers stopping rheumatic pains and foot misery as explained in this authoritative article.

According to my own experience the effects are certainly quite similar, and there is no doubt that the various spas and springs of Europe produced some wonderful results when so widely patronised before the war. True, they were often beyond the reach of any but wealthy sufferers, but if any better method of treatment were available, the wealthy victims of rheumatism, gout, etc., would have been amongst the first to discover and take prompt advantage of it. As a perfect substitute for costly spa treatments, I personally found the inexpensive and convenient Reudel Bath Saltrates to answer every possible requirement, and without the necessity for any long journey to a thermal spring.

Many well-known people recommended the saltrated baths before I finally decided to use them. Harry Lauder, for instance, after trying them himself, found the results so good that he generously sent a very large quantity of Reudel Bath Saltrates over to his numerous friends among boys in the trenches, to their great delight.

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"In order to answer a recent enquiry from the Front, I obtained particulars of some ingenious devices for mitigating minor discomforts of camp life on active service, especially those of cold and wet weather; for example, a practical weather-proof tent that can be folded into a parcel small enough to go into an overcoat pocket; a waterproof groundsheet weighing less than 1 lb., and a capital sleeping bag which weighs no more than 1¼ lb. These are among many useful articles supplied by the LIGHTWEIGHT TENT CO., 61, HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON, W.C. 1, and I think my Service Readers may be glad to know of them."

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The country is very short of fuel—The Government ask you to be economical in your use of Gas. *Vide The British Commercial Gas Association.*

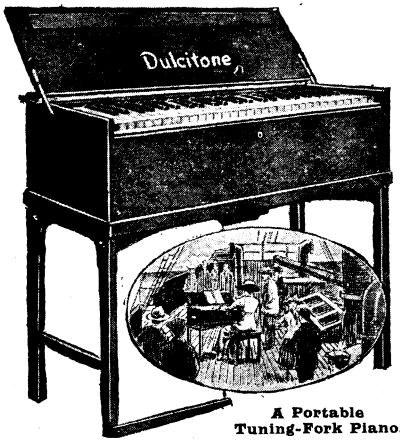
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THE Dulcitone has keys and touch like an ordinary piano, but never requires tuning, as the sound-producers are tuning-forks instead of strings. It is so light (about 50 lbs.) that it can be easily carried from one room to another, and it has a charming harp-like tone.

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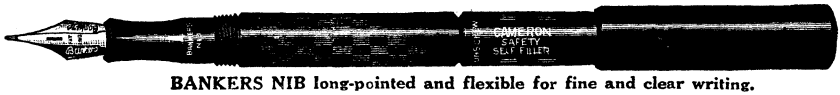
HINDOO NIB for all who incline on the side of the pen in writing.

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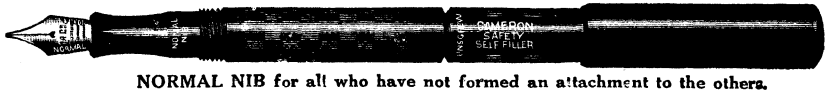
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At all chemists 4/3 a tin.

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will remove them? Rub a little OATINE into the skin and then wipe off with a clean towel; it will be black with dirt and grime removed from the pores which soap and water could not reach. Get OATINE to-day, 1/1½ and 2/3, everywhere.

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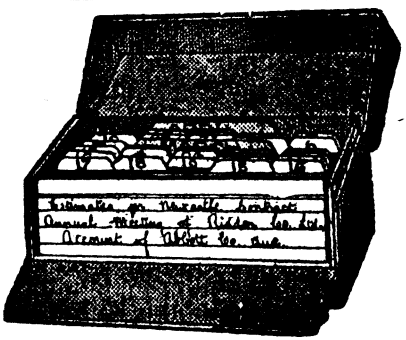
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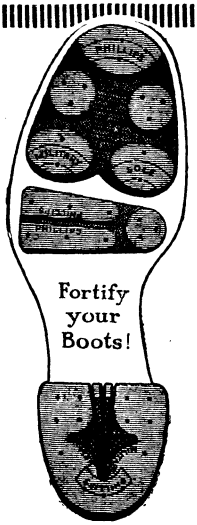
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BE sure to ask for **VI**-Cocoa—always.

VI means **Life.** And VI-Cocoa is so named because it revives and invigorates all who take it.

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Always ask for VI-COCOA—and see that "Little Miss Vi" is on every packet.

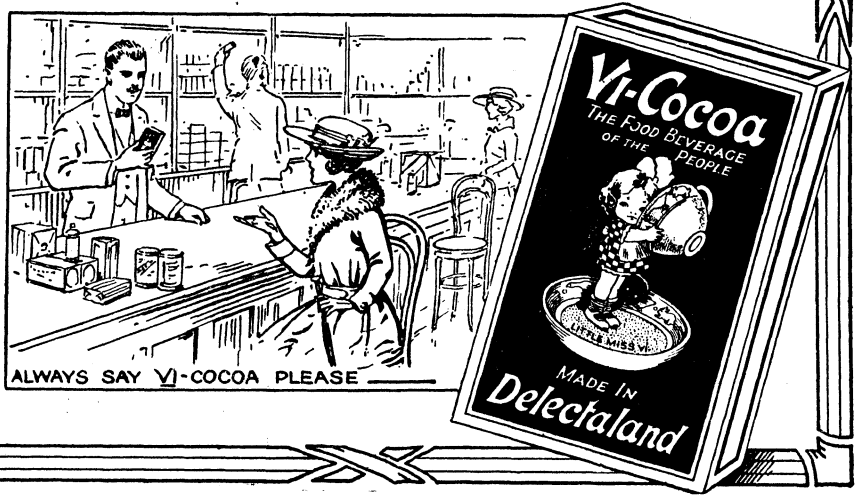
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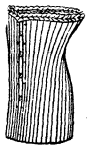
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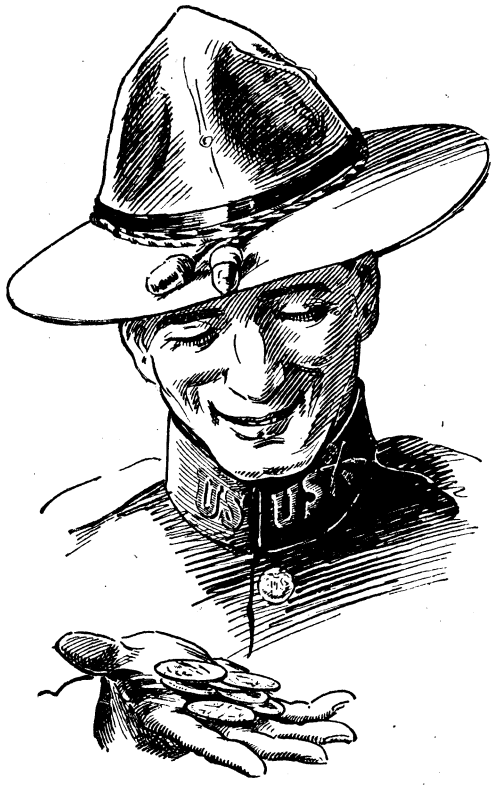
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"The Chinese money they use over here sure does phaze me. Can anybody tell me what this cartwheel thing's worth? Looks like a silver dollar, but it might be a laundry check. I sure will be glad when I can use human money again. But you've got to hand it to them, the people use you white. Just went in for a packet of 'Army Clubs,' like these Britishers smoke, and they gave me all kinds of money in change, and believe me, boy, some cigarette too! They're worth twice the dough."

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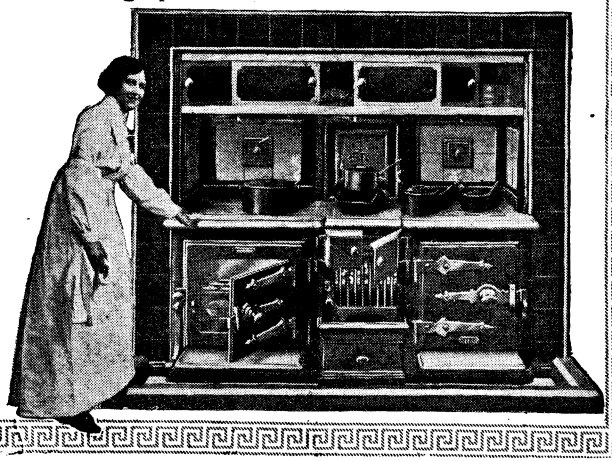
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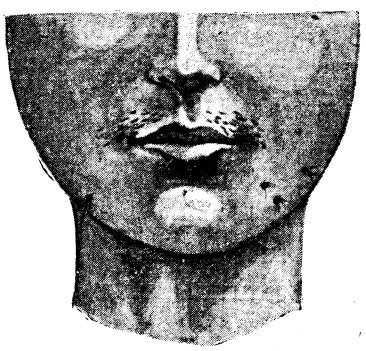
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Every lady suffering from hairy growths will be pleased to learn that these can be removed for ever by a new method which cannot possibly harm the most delicate skin. It is so sure that it is just a matter of days and the hair is gone for ever, leaving a beautiful clear skin. There is no expensive treatment or appliances to buy. You will not be put to any inconvenience. All you have to do can be done in the privacy of your own apartments. This new method is worthy of your interest. We specially want those sufferers who have tried other methods to write, as, unless we can prove that we can do all that we claim, we do not ask you to take up this treatment.

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It is a true skin beautifier, bringing to the face the much-admired contours of youth, rejuvenating the skin, cleansing it, soothing it, *feeding* it, thus ensuring skin health and lasting beauty.

A short trial will convince you that Pomeroy Skin Food is the one face cream that you need for *your* complexion.

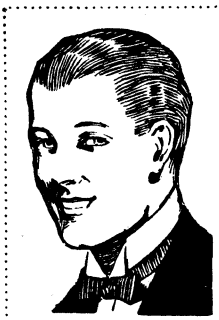
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1/6, 3/6, and 5/- Jars.

Of High-class Chemists and Perfumers.

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Master the hair



Just apply a little Anzora Cream in the morning and the hair will retain the fashionable, smoothly-brushed effect all day, for Anzora will master even the most uncontrollable head of hair. This preparation is *entirely free from oil or grease*, so will not leave greasy marks. It is delicately perfumed.

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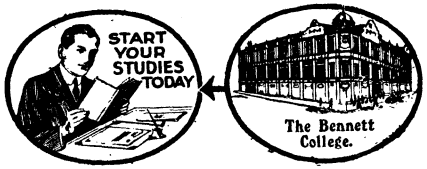
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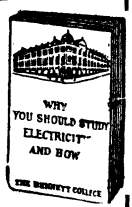


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How to Banish the Depression, Pain, Melancholy, and Irritability of Liver Troubles.

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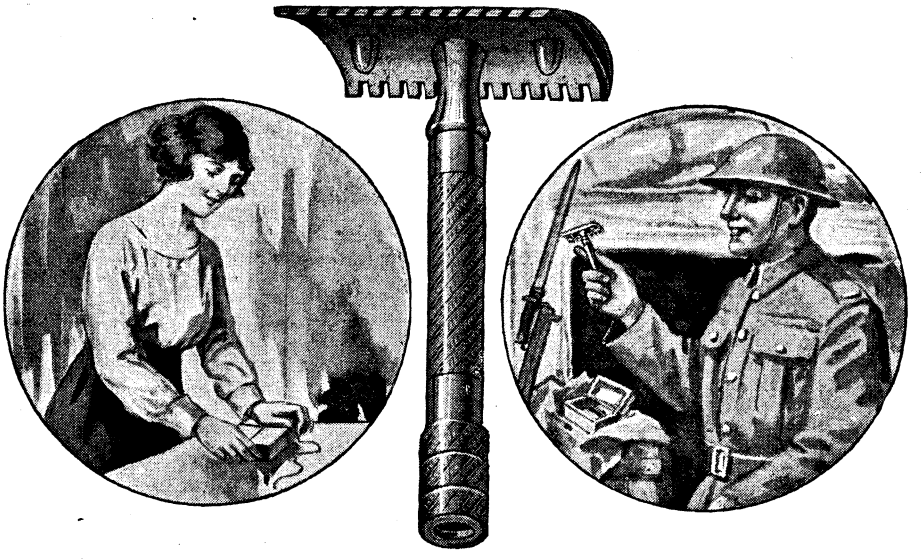


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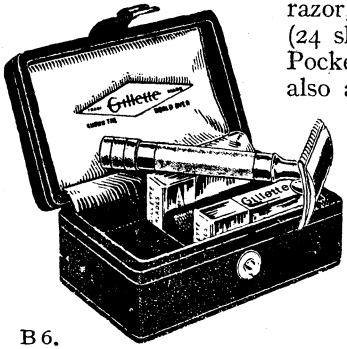
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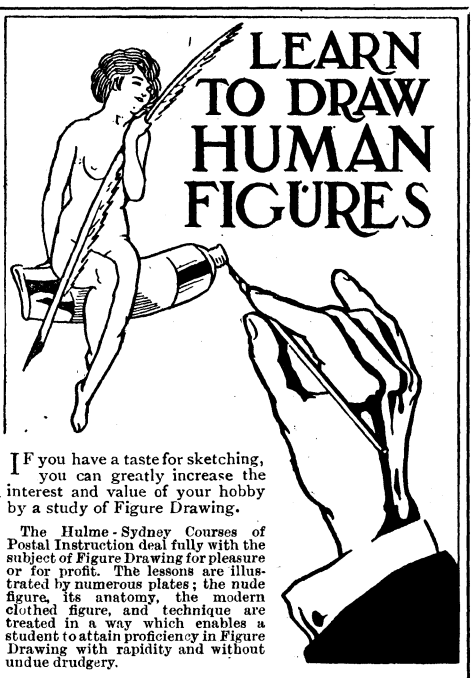


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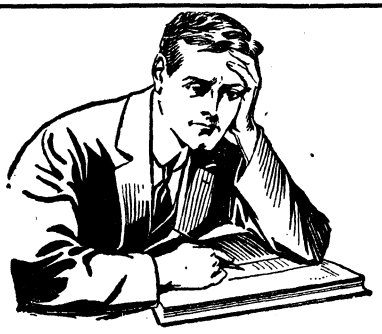
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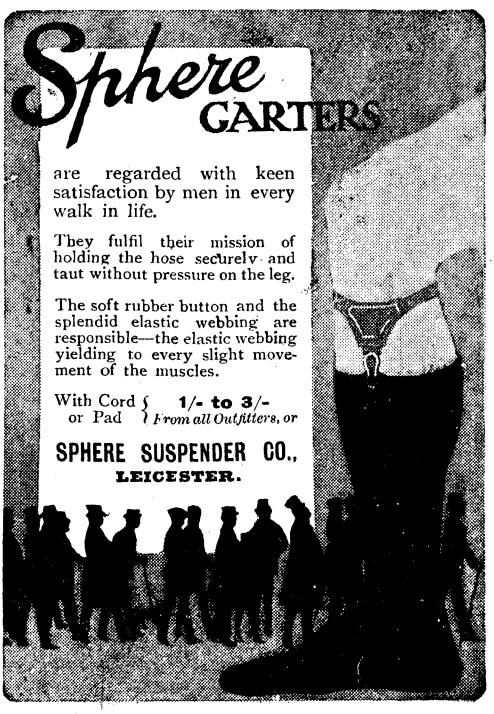
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are regarded with keen satisfaction by men in every walk in life.

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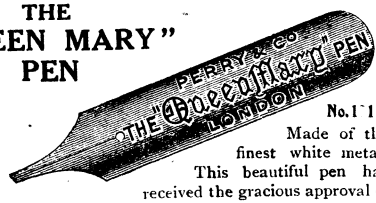
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Inebriety and Drug-taking are diseases which *can* be Cured

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This treatment has been in constant use for more than thirty years, and is recognised by the public as the only successful method of treating Inebriety and Drug-taking. It is not a cheap, self-administered home remedy, but is given only by doctors who have made a special study of the disease.

Patients at the Keeley Institute are under no restraint or restriction. Whatever drink or drugs are necessary are unhesitatingly supplied. They walk in and out at will; many carry on their daily business while residing at the Institute. In a few days they cease to ask for stimulants or drugs; the craving is eradicated and the will-power built up.

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A penny roll is now as small
As pennyworths of matches,
The cake is like the curate's egg—
It's only good in patches.
But, thank the Lord, you still can get,
By way of consolation,
The same old "Chairman" Cigarette,
The famous pre-war ration.

Abdur-ayman met a drayman
Going on his round;
Said Abdur-ayman to the drayman,
"What are coals a pound?"
The drayman said: "In all Bagdad
No better coals you'll get;
So for each pound, my lord, I ask
A 'Chairman' Cigarette."

By seven long strides, since Life began,
The Simian ape became a man:—
First, when he stood erect to walk;
The second, when he learned to talk;
And next he made some weapons rude;
And, fourth, began to cook his food;
Then, fifth, to need of dress he woke;
And sixth, discovered how to smoke;
Seventh—the highest stage as yet—
He made a "Chairman" Cigarette.

With petrol under lock and key,
The push-bike has its day;
No honking bullies mar my ride
Or camouflage my way.
Let Stanley raise the price of steam,
And stop the seaside trip;
Give me a "Chairman" and a bike,
And off I go—Pip, Pip!

Said Jane: "It is a burning shame
That sugar's scarce and dear,
While men can still get cigarettes
To spoil the atmosphere."
Tom took a "Chairman" from his lips,
Said he: "You're scarcely fair;
You like some sweetness in your tea,
I like mine in the air."

With letters at three-halfpence each,
What will true lovers do?
But there'll be fewer for the judge
To read when troubles brew.
The cash would be more safely spent
On "Chairman" Cigarettes,
And smoke-rings do not cost so much
As those a lover gets.

They say that there are thirty ways
To cook a new potato,
And twenty ways of making love,
According unto Plato;
Some fifteen ways of eating shrimps,
And twelve of picking oakum;
Quite ten of making cigarettes,
And six at least to smoke 'em.
But when you've put them to the test,
You'll own that "Chairman" is the best.

One touch of Nature
Makes the whole world kin;
One touch of pedal
Makes the old bike spin;
One penny wasted
Is a penny less to keep;
One whiff of "Chairman"
Sends your worries off to sleep.

Some of the illustrations and facts in "Cigarettes in the Making" have been supplied by the Proprietors of "Chairman" Cigarettes.

Face matter at end.]

TO SENTRY-GO.

By Lieutenant Gilbert Collins.

O tearful track so many boots have beaten,
O promenade so short and yet so vile!
What aches have gnawed me as my soles have eaten
Your thorny surface, mile on dreary mile!
How I have chafed and fumed—above a trifle—
With thoughts that turn the air of morning sour,
And bent beneath the barrel of a rifle
That puts on stones each hour!

Yet have I scorned to dodge your dire monotony,
Nor followed those who would beguile the time
In telling o'er their coppers—if they've got any—
Or laying down the plans of deathless rhyme;
Nor have I sought, unsportsmanlike and crafty,
The balm of sleep for spirits numbed and flat:
Besides, our sentry-box is lots too draughty
For anything of that.

Nor do I find you void of compensation:
Though with the lees of boredom you are rife,
I thank you much for moods of exaltation
I never should have known in "civvy" life:
Through you alone I boast, O Sentry-Duty,
That I have witnessed, well-nigh with a shout
Of joy at his unquestionable beauty,
Old Phœbus turning out!

JANE MAKES TOFFEE.

SINCE we last heard of Jane I am sorry to say she has been a bad child. Although she receives one halfpenny a week pocket-money, to which her kind parent has recently added a War bonus of fifty per cent., she finds it impossible to satisfy her craving for sweets at the present price of four shillings a pound. So one evening, while her mamma was at a sewing-party, making respirators for asthmatical soldiers, and Miss Cox was breaking plates at a canteen, Jane took from the larder a pound of sugar which was reserved for rhubarb jam, and three ounces of butter which her mamma was hoarding for her own use. Then she got the best saucepan and lit the largest gas-ring, and made some delicious toffee. Alas! before it had cooled down, her mamma came home unexpectedly, and told Jane she was a deceitful and wicked child. "As part of your punishment," she said, "I will eat the toffee myself." And she put a large piece in her mouth. But lo! she was unable to open it again, and appeared to be suffering from severe lockjaw, so Jane hurried to bed without waiting for the other part of her punishment. Then Miss Cox came in and took a portion, and was also struck speechless. Next morning, while they were undergoing alterations and repairs at the



SO CARELESS!

"WHO was here with you last night?"
"Well—er—Agnes was here, father."
"Well, tell Agnes she's left her spurs and 'Sam Browne' under the settee."

MORRIS'S Yellow Seal Cigarettes

TRADE MARK

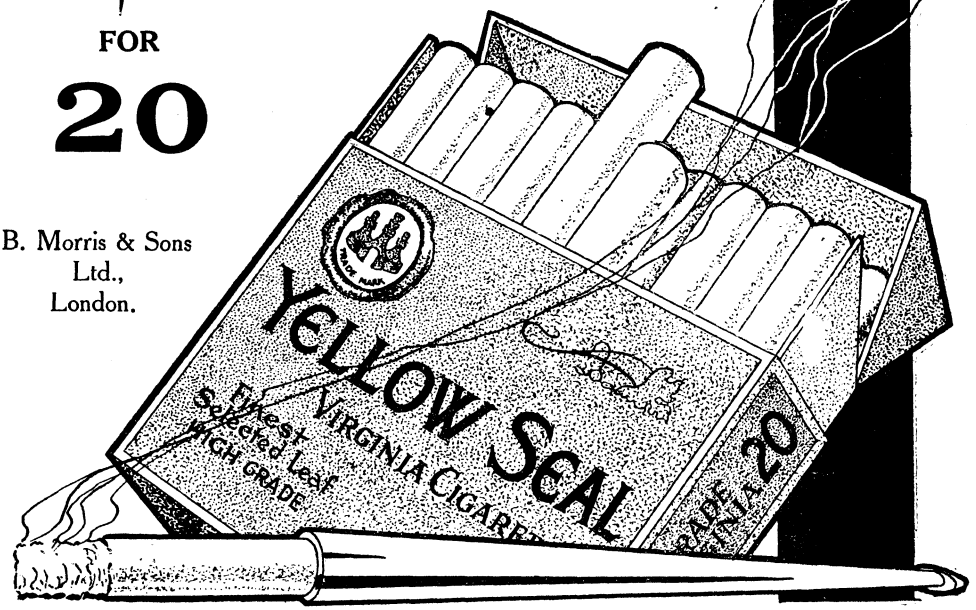
for the experienced and cultured smoker.

Every cigarette smoker who prides himself on being a judge, should try a box of these choice **VIRGINIA CIGARETTES.** They have that subtle touch of refinement, superiority and distinctiveness which stamps them immediately as the cigarette ***I've been looking for.***

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B. Morris & Sons Ltd., London.



Some of the information in "Cigarettes in the Making" has been supplied by Messrs. B. Morris & Sons, Ltd.

dentist's, Jane finished up the toffee, which was then nice and hard. Moral: Never eat lukewarm toffee.

WHEN a certain well-known politician made one of his earliest speeches, his mother was present, and he girded up his eloquence particularly for the occasion. When he finished he asked—

"Well, mother, what did you think of it?"

"Why, William," quietly answered the mother, "it seemed to me you didn't improve all your opportunities."

"How do you mean, mother?" asked he.

"Well, it seemed to me," said the mother, "that you had several opportunities to sit down before you did."

If they standardised our incomes, it would cause me no surprise;
But perhaps they'll do a thing I greatly dread—
Fix a very early hour as the standard time to rise,
And eight p.m. as standard time for bed.

R. H. Roberts.

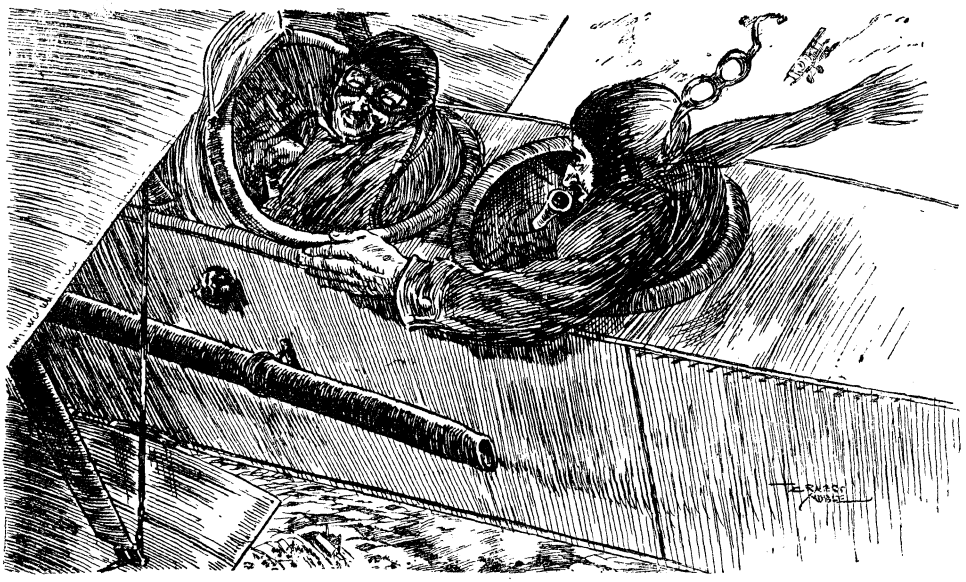
A VILLAGE with very few children to be seen about piqued the curiosity of a holiday-maker, one summer, and he said to a farmer—

"Not as many children playing in the streets here as in most places?"

"No, sir, not many," was the answer.

"How often are children born here?" asked the inquirer.

"Only once," was the answer.



JUST TO OBLIGE.

SCENE—six thousand feet. Friend up with stunt pilot for the first time: I say, old man, do you mind going down? I've dropped my wrist-watch!

THE STANDARD CRAZE.

The craze for all that's "standard" makes you want
to sit and think
Of the happy time that's coming by and by;
To standardise our costumes, and our eatables and
drink,
And the way we do our hair they're sure to try.

They'll build us standard houses in a straight and
standard row,
With standard lino laid upon the floors,
And only standard roses in the garden we shall
grow,
And all our keys will fit each other's doors.

The future standard husband will select his standard
wife,
One warranted to mend the clothes and cook,
With a special standard training to avoid domestic
strife—
He'll choose her from a pattern in a book.

SHE was pretty and he was handsome, and they were very devoted to each other as they sat and held hands and watched the play at the baseball match lately popularised in England since the advent of the American troops.

"There's Hal Chase on first," observed the youth. "He's a bird. And there's Tony, the pitcher. He'll be our best man before long——"

The sweet young thing gasped. "We-ell, I dare say he'll be all right—but, Arthur, this is so sudden!"

TELL a woman casually, as it were, says an authority on the fair sex, of the effect of her beauty or intelligence on a third party, and it will win her to you more than a bushel of your own best compliments.



Mason's 'O.K.' SAUCE

The 'FRUITINESS' of 'O.K.' Sauce makes it of great service to-day—of absolute purity, can be used freely with one's daily diet.

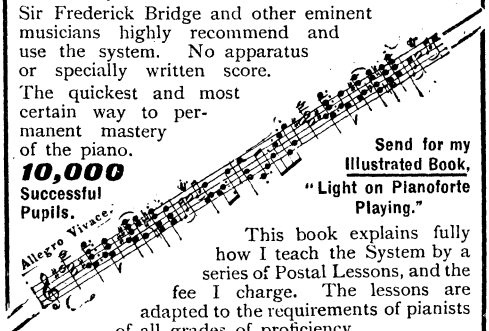
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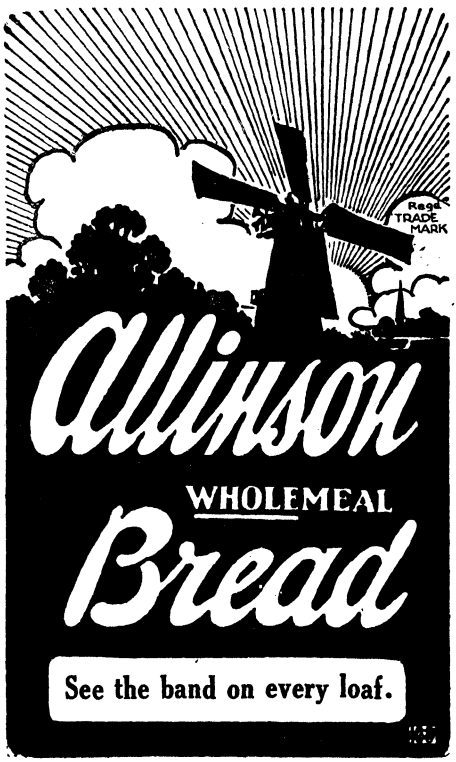
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Apply for booklet to-day, **but do not omit** to state whether average or advanced player, or, if a beginner, whether you can or cannot play at sight a simple hymn-tune. Send 3*d*. for part war-time cost and postage.

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From Brain to Keyboard

There is only one "From Brain to Keyboard" System, the original one in every sense.



MAUDE'S YOUNG MAN.

"EVERYBODY that's got any time on their hands," said Mrs. Perkins, "ought to have a hobby. Even if it's only collecting ginger-beer bottles or fag pictures, it helps to take your mind off things a bit. Not having a hobby has been the ruin of lots of people. There was a grocer down our way who'd been in business forty years, and then retired. I don't wonder at it, the ha'pennies he used to stick on everything. He took a lovely house near Wanstead Flats, overlooking the cemetery. A regular palace it was, with two bay windows and a stained-glass front door with a brass step, and 'No Circulars or Hawkers' on the gate. Then there was a bathroom, and gas stoves all over the place. But he wasn't happy, although surrounded by luxury, as you might say, and he soon got tired of having baths and watching the funerals. What he missed most was the smell of the old shop, and though he always kept an extra strong cheese on the mahogany sideboard to remind him of it, having no hobby did him in, and if he hadn't taken on the business again, he'd have finished up in the County Council asylum. Of course, you mustn't let your hobby run away with you, like a man Perkins used to know. He went round with a barrow all day, buying up old iron; that was his trade. And he went out at night with a sack, collecting door-knobs and knockers; that was his hobby. But he couldn't make the magistrate look at it like that, and now *he's* retired—for a few months.

"It was my Maude's feeansey who had the strangest hobby I ever heard of. Soon after they started walking out together he came round one night with his eye in a sling. 'Whatever's the matter, Bert?' shrieked Maude. 'Got a bit of steel in my optic at the works to-day,' he ses. 'Don't upset yourself, old girl; I'm always doing things like that.' And so he was. Soon after he fell off a ladder on to a packing-case, and the very first day he went back to work, a packing-case fell off a ladder on to *him*. When he went for a ride on a 'bus he very seldom came down the stairs like other people—he seemed to prefer falling off the top—and I can't remember how many times he was biffed by motor-cars.

"He got so used to being in the hospital, it was more like home to him, and they always kept a bed ready for him day and night. After being in there six weeks, through a little



URGENT.

"My little boy is ill, doctor. Can you come at once?"
"Sorry, but I shan't be able to get round under an hour."
"For Heaven's sake, do! It may be a case of life or death."
"Why, is he as bad as all that?"
"Not yet. But my wife's got ideas of her own on what to do if I shouldn't find you in, and I am afraid she'll do it."

"WAIT UNTIL THE TRAIN STOPS!"

IT is surprising that the average man, whilst wisely taking every precaution to protect himself in respect of risk of loss from Fire, Burglary, Accidents to Employees, &c., neglects to insure himself in respect of the ever-present risk of serious illness, accident, and disease.

"Wait until the Train Stops" and "Safety First" cautions, together with numerous other public warnings, all proclaim the constant danger to life and limb; yet little heed is paid to them by the average man.

In London alone hundreds of fatal, serious, and minor accidents happen every year, and no degree of caution can ensure absolute safeguards against Illness and Disease. How great, then, the need for adequate insurance!

A serious accident may happen to *you* or you may become the victim of a dangerous illness. You never can tell.

Everyone who studies his own interests should send a postcard to-day for full particulars of a series of attractive insurances now issued at moderate rates by the "British Dominions," providing for liberal benefits in the event of fatal and other accidents and most serious forms of disease and illness. There are ten different Tables, affording benefits which vary according to risk and premium, and which are designed to meet the requirements of all classes.



This represents only one of the many hundred accidents of different forms which happen every day.

Every professional, business and working man should avail himself of this opportunity to take up a policy which provides for many substantial benefits. Please ask for "Accident, Sickness, and Disease Insurance Prospectus."

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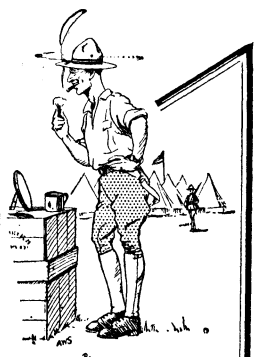
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A Tommy writes:

"Whilst on Active Service, Gibbs's Shaving Soap was a familiar friend to many of us. Hot water was seldom obtainable, and cold tea or dirty water were often the only substitutes. However, your Soap was always equal to the task, and whatever the medium created a creamy lather."

Made from the purest of materials, combined with which is an especially soothing Cream, Gibbs's Cold Cream Shaving Soap ensures a quick, clean shave and the skin left soft and plastic.

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Price 7d. & 1/- **Of all Chemists.**

Send your boy at the Front or at Sea a stick of Gibbs's Cold Cream Shaving Soap. He'll appreciate its cleanly, mild, fragrant lather and the sense of comfort a shave with Gibbs's brings.

D. & W. GIBBS, LTD. (Dept. 9),

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W.H.S. Secretary, 102, Myddleton Rd., Wood Green, London, N. 22.

When buying **BAKING POWDER** insist on having

BORWICK'S

The strongest, best & most economical in the world.

misunderstanding with a steam windlass at the docks, he was walking along the Mile End Road, not thinking of anything in particular, when he tripped over a rope with a brewer's dray at one end of it and a barrel of beer at the other, and rolled down into the cellar, clasping a thirty-six gallon cask of XX to his heart. Another time he fell downstairs, and later on he fell upstairs. Maude said that was a sign a wedding was going to take place in the family, and she decided to get married. He made his hobby pay, anyhow; what with workmen's compensation and club money always coming in, he'd got a wee little bit put by, and they managed very comfortable. It's a funny thing, but since they got married he's never had a single accident, and he ses his luck's changed.

"Maude was a bit annoyed about it at first, but, as I told her, she could hardly expect him to keep it up for ever."

PAST AND PRESENT.

They were not always very chic;
Their hands were rough, their hair was dusty.
They knew enough arithmetic
To add our bills—the rest was rusty.
Did we complain, they'd swim in tears.
I wonder how that old brigade is,
And if they miss us, the poor dears?
Here's health to our pre-War landladies!

They're gaily at it, learning "how."
By Jove, they don't take long to learn it!
They weed, they harrow, guide the plough,
They get fair money, and they earn it.
Their eyes are bright, their cheeks are tanned,
Hands grimed—well, who cares what the shade is?
They're doing wonders on the land,
And here's a health, War-time land-ladies!

Ethel Talbot.



NO LAUGHING MATTER.

TOMMY: Why didn't yer smile when yer 'ad this photo taken?
JOCK: Are ye crazy, mon? They were costing me twa shillings a dozen!

A LOCAL politician was talking to a farmer, and asked him why it was that farm products should cost so much more than formerly.

"They don't of themselves," replied the farmer. "It's because a farmer has got to know so much more."

"Why," said the politician, "does that affect the price?"

"Well," replied the farmer, "when a farmer is supposed to know the botanical name of what he's raisin', an' the entomological name of the insect that eats it, an' the pharmaceutical name of the chemical that will kill the insect, somebody's got to pay him for getting the knowledge."

AN old book of sermons was recently taken out of a public library, and on its flyleaf was found written—

If there should be another flood,
For refuge hither fly;
Though all the world should be submerged,
This book would still be dry.

To find out whether a girl loves him, says a wise writer, let a young man refer to some trifling detail of the previous conversation. Something very trivial it must be. If she remembers, let him go to the nearest jeweller.



When My Boy Comes Home

By MIMOSA.

Wrinkles and Grey Hair Must Disappear.

TWO years can make a great change in a woman's appearance at any time, but two years of war worries often add ten years to one's apparent age, and this was what the two years during which her husband had been away had done to Gladys Summers. She had aged tremendously; little lines and wrinkles had formed round her eyes, and deep lines around her mouth, and her hair had become tinged with grey. In fact, she was in despair as to what the man who had left her looking so young and fit would think of her when he returned.

* * * *

Six Weeks to Effect a Transformation.

WHEN she came to confide her troubles to me she had just six weeks in which to improve herself, for by that time he was due home.

Six weeks isn't long, but I felt sure that if she really tried she could make a very great improvement.

* * * *

Removing the Wrinkles.

TO smooth out the wrinkles I made her get a little pure mercolised wax and rub it gently into her face and neck every night, working the wax into the skin very carefully, and rubbing always in an upward and outward direction. Mercolised wax has the effect of gently and imperceptibly peeling off all the old dead skin, and with it the lines and wrinkles, which, as you probably know, are only on the outer skin and not beneath it, as so many people think. Every night the wax was applied evenly all over the face, and gradually the old skin and the wrinkles disappeared, and the fresh, young complexion underneath soon became apparent, soft, smooth, and clear.

* * * *

Restoring the Grey Hair.

HAIR dyes are an abomination; Gladys and I were both agreed on that point, and, what was far more important, she was dreadfully afraid that if she used a dye, the colour might not be quite the same as her own, and that her husband would notice the difference.

I advised her to get two ounces of tammalite, and to use it regularly for a week. The tammalite should be mixed with three ounces of bay rum, and applied to the roots with a small sponge.

Once a fortnight I told her she must shampoo her hair, so as to keep it in good condition, and for this she used a dessert-spoonful of stallax dissolved in warm water. After a stallax shampoo it is not necessary to rinse the hair, as the hair is left soft and silky, with a natural wave which is most pleasing.

* * * *

The Finishing Touches.

INSTEAD of using powder, Gladys got an ounce of cleminite and dissolved it in water. This she dabbed over her face and neck, and allowed it to dry on the skin; while to give a slight colour to the cheeks she applied a little colliandum with a piece of cotton-wool. Colliandum is quite unique, as it cannot be detected, and as the atmosphere of the room grows warmer, so the colour deepens slightly, giving an absolutely natural appearance.



Every woman would like shoulders, arms, and neck like these ; any woman who will follow my directions can have them.

Plump, rosy cheeks, too ; full chest and bust, robust health. No apparatus nor unpleasant diet ; just the things any woman can do in a few minutes every day, and is glad to do, considering the results.

Send me your name and address, together with a stamp to cover cost of postage, and I will send you a Booklet which fully describes my treatment.

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